

ASTHMA AT SCHOOL

ASTHMA TRAINING

Talking Points for School Staff

TALKING POINTS and TEST QUESTIONS

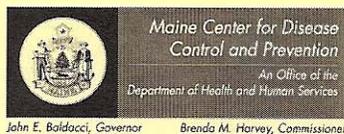
These are tools for use in training school staff. The TALKING POINTS are a guide for training and discussion. The TEST QUESTIONS (copy on the back) are suggested and can be used pre & post training. The results of the test can be used as a tool to guide, direct and supplement training.

TEST QUESTION ANSWER KEY

- | | |
|------|----------------|
| 1. F | 6. T |
| 2. F | 7. T |
| 3. T | 8. F |
| 4. T | 9. T |
| 5. F | 10. T, we hope |

This Asthma Training has been a collaboration of:

Maine Asthma Control and Prevention Program



The School Workgroup



ASTHMA TRAINING: Talking Points for School Staff

1. Asthma is a Major Health Problem in the U.S. and in Maine

- 5 million school-aged children have asthma.¹
 - Students miss almost 13 million school days each year due to asthma.²
 - Asthma is the 3rd-ranking cause of hospitalization among children under 15.³
 - On average, 3 children in a classroom of 30 are likely to have asthma.⁴
 - 15% of Maine children have had asthma symptoms in their lifetime.⁵
 - 40% of Maine's kindergarten and third grader students with asthma do not have a written action plan (Asthma Action Plan.)⁶
 - Children on MaineCare have higher prevalence of asthma than those with other insurance.⁷
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2. How Can Asthma Impact Student Learning?

- Fatigue: students up at night with coughing, wheezing and other symptoms are overtired in the morning.
 - Absenteeism: students are out due to asthma episodes, health care appointments, and hospitalizations.
 - Missed class time: frequent visits to the school health office cause interruptions to scheduled lessons.
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3. What is Asthma?

Asthma is a condition that:

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> is chronic | <input type="checkbox"/> produces recurring episodes of breathing problems | <input type="checkbox"/> is not contagious |
| <input type="checkbox"/> is potentially life-threatening | <input type="checkbox"/> can occur at any age | <input type="checkbox"/> cannot be cured, but can be controlled |
-

4. What are the Symptoms of Asthma?

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> shortness of breath | <input type="checkbox"/> tightness in the chest | <input type="checkbox"/> Waking at night with any of the listed symptoms* |
| <input type="checkbox"/> wheezing | <input type="checkbox"/> Coughing | |

** a key marker of uncontrolled asthma*

5. Is There A Cure For Asthma?

- Asthma cannot be cured, but it can be controlled. Most young people with asthma should be able to live healthy, active lives with minimal symptoms.
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6. What Can Make Asthma Worse?

- Not all factors affect all people. It's important to identify what affects a particular student's asthma.

ALLERGENS such as:

- furred and feathered animals
- dust mites
- cockroaches
- pollens from grass and trees
- molds (indoors and outdoors)

IRRITANTS such as:

- exposure to tobacco smoke
- scented products
- strong fumes or odors
- outdoor air pollution

OTHER things, such as:

- infections such as colds, flu, sinusitis
- cold air
- some medications
- obesity
- stress/depression
- other conditions such as GERD

7. What Happens During an Episode of Asthma?

- The lining of the airways become narrow and easily irritated due to inflammation.
- The airways produce a thick mucus.
- The muscles around the airways tighten and make airways narrower.

8. How to Handle an Asthma Episode

- 1. Quickly evaluate the situation. Encourage the student to use his/her rescue inhaler if available.
- 2. If rescue inhaler is not available, bring the student to the school nurse.
- 3. If severe and child is not recovering, call 911, then call parent/guardian.

9. How Is Asthma Controlled?

- Follow an individualized, written asthma action plan.
- Reduce or eliminate exposure to things that can cause asthma symptoms.
- Encourage and support use of medication as prescribed.
 - Quick-relief medicine for all students with asthma.
 - Long-term control medicine for students with persistent asthma.
- Monitor response to treatment and level of asthma control.
- Encourage regular follow-up care.
- Ensure good communication among school, the student's doctor, and home.

10. Physical Education and Activity

- Encourage full participation when student is well.
- Allow pre-treatment and/or warm-up before physical activity.
- Ensure student access to quick-relief medication during activity.
- Provide modified activities as needed.

11. What Should Most People with Asthma Be Able To Do?

- Be active without having asthma symptoms; this includes participating in physical activity and sports.
- Sleep through the night without having asthma symptoms.
- Know how to prevent asthma episodes.
- Have the best possible lung function (e.g., good peak flow number.)

**Schools, families, and the community can work together
to help students better manage their asthma.**

ENDNOTES:

1. Epidemiology and Statistics Unit. *Trends in Asthma Morbidity and Mortality*. NYC: ALA, July 2006.
2. CDC. *Asthma Prevalence, Health Care Use and Mortality, 2003-2005*. National Center for Health Statistics. Washington, DC.
3. Hall MJ & DeFrances CJ. *2001 National Hospital Discharge Survey*. Advance data from Vital and Health Statistics, Table 3; no 332. Hyattsville, MD: NCHS, 2003.
4. Epidemiology and Statistics Unit. *Trends in Asthma Morbidity and Mortality*. NYC: ALA, July 2006.
5. *2003 National Survey of Children's Health* 6. *2004 Maine Child Health Survey* 7. *2008 the Burden of Asthma in Maine*

ASTHMA TRAINING: Talking Points for for School Staff

TEST QUESTIONS

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| 1. Asthma is a disease that can be cured. | T | F |
| 2. Asthma triggers are the same for all people with asthma. | T | F |
| 3. Uncontrolled asthma can impact student learning. | T | F |
| 4. Coughing can be a symptom of asthma. | T | F |
| 5. Students with asthma miss just as much school as other students. | T | F |
| 6. It is important to know what each student's triggers are. | T | F |
| 7. Students with asthma should be physically active. | T | F |
| 8. Students with asthma should take their controller medication at the first sign of an asthma attack. | T | F |
| 9. When their asthma is controlled, students with asthma can participate in school activities. | T | F |
| 10. If a student with asthma has an episode, I know what to do. | T | F |



Department of Health
and Human Services

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