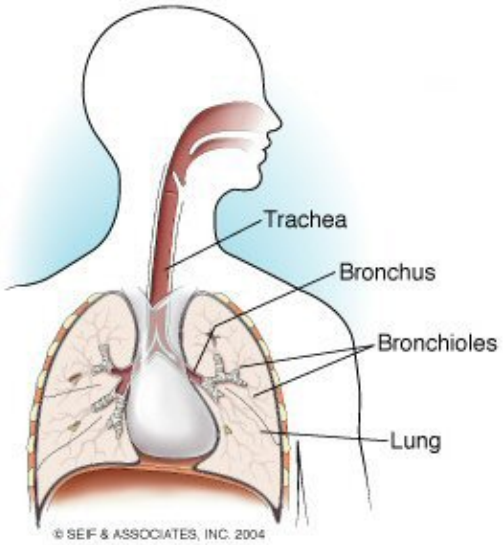
Childhood Asthma

Asthma is a common illness of childhood. It is a disease of the lungs and can make it hard to breathe. Asthma cannot be cured, but medicine can help control it. Some children outgrow asthma. Asthma may be started (*triggered*) by:

- Pollen.
- Dust.
- Animal skin flakes (*dander*).
- Molds.
- Foods.
- Respiratory infections (colds, flu).
- Smoke.
- Exercise.
- Stress.
- Other things that cause allergic reactions or allergies (*allergens*).



If exercise causes an asthma attack in your child, medicine can be prescribed to help. Medicine allows most children with asthma to continue to play sports.

HOME CARE

- Talk to your doctor about how to manage your child's attacks at home. This may include:
  - Using a tool called a peak flow meter.
  - Having medicine ready to stop the attack.
- **No one** should smoke in your home or anywhere near your child.
- Remain calm if your child has an attack.
- Wash bed sheets and blankets every week in hot water and put them in the dryer.
- Change the furnace filter often.
- Put cheesecloth over the heating and air conditioning vents.
- Always be ready to get emergency help. Write down the phone number for your child's doctor. Keep it where you can easily find it.
- **If your child seems to be getting worse, get help right away.**

GET HELP IF:

- Your child has muscle aches.
- Your child coughs more.
- Your child cannot eat or drink normally.

GET HELP RIGHT AWAY IF:

- Your child has chest pain.
- Your child's mucus (*sputum*) changes to yellow, green, gray, or bloody.
- Medicine does not stop your child's wheezing.
- Your child has problems breathing.
- Your child cannot speak normally.
- Your child has a temperature by mouth above 102° F (38.9° C), not controlled by medicine.
- Your baby is older than 3 months with a rectal temperature of 102º F (38.9º C) or higher.
- **Your baby is 3 months old or younger with a rectal temperature of 100.4º F (38º C) or higher.**

MAKE SURE YOU:

- Understand these instructions.
- Watch your child's condition.
- Get help right away if your child is not doing well or gets worse.

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