



Asthma triggers and management

Asthma is a chronic lung disease that causes swelling and irritation of the airways. This makes the airways smaller so it's harder to breathe. Here are some symptoms of asthma:

- Cough
- Shortness of breath
- Wheezing
- Chest tightness

Avoiding triggers helps improve asthma and reduces the need for medicine. Asthma triggers are things that cause asthma to flare up or get worse. Common triggers include:

- Weather changes
- Pollen
- Dust or mold

- Tobacco smoke
- Strong odors
- Viral infections
- Pets
- Exercise
- Anxiety

Everyone with asthma needs "quick relief" or "rescue" medicine to use when you have an asthma attack. This medicine allows airways to open so you can breathe easier. Some people also need "controller" medicines to use daily to decrease inflammation in the airways to help prevent asthma attacks.

An asthma action plan is a written guide to help keep you well and deal with asthma

problems. You make this plan with your doctor. The plan may change as your asthma needs change. You should have a copy at home, school and with other caregivers.

An asthma action plan includes:

- A daily care plan to help keep you well and how to meet your goals for asthma control.
- A rescue plan to help you deal with increasing symptoms quickly.
- A guide for asthma emergencies to help you know when to call the doctor and when you need emergency help.

Preventing baby bottle tooth decay

Formulas, breast milk, juices and almost all other drinks (except water) have natural sugars in them. Baby bottle tooth decay occurs when these liquids stay in contact with the teeth and tongue for a long time.

Even before your child has his or her first teeth, you should keep their gums and tongue healthy by wiping them with a moist cloth after every bottle feeding and before bedtime.

One of the first signs of baby bottle tooth decay is white rough patches on the area closest to the gumline. Baby bottle tooth decay also begins behind the front teeth.

Your child should have his or her first dental visit at one year old, and see the dentist every six months for a checkup.

By two years old, your child should be in the habit of brushing at least twice a day.

You should show your baby how to drink from a cup before he is one year old so it will be easier for him or her to stop drinking from a bottle.

The health of a pregnant mom's mouth can also affect the health of her baby. Hormone changes during pregnancy make gums more sensitive to plaque bacteria. Researchers have found a link between serious gum disease and pregnant women whose babies were born too early or at a low birth weight. Women should take steps to prevent gum disease during pregnancy by getting a dental check up as soon as they know they are pregnant.

Upcoming Events

April 29th F.E.S.tival

10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
South Houston Intermediate
900 College Ave.
South Houston, 77587
Free for all families

May 6th Healthy Kids of Pasadena

10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Jackson Intermediate
1020 E. Thomas
Pasadena, 77506
Free for all families

Call 1-800-990-8247
for more event information.

Poison prevention

Children by nature are curious and are always discovering new things. Children are especially attracted to colors and smells. Their curiosity isn't only for good things, but also includes dangerous things, like poisons. Poisons are all around us, in our homes and outside.

Help protect your children by protecting them from poisons found in the home.

Here are a few tips to keep your children safe from poisoning:

- Put all cleaning supplies out of reach of children and lock them up.
- Keep all products in their original containers.
- Don't refer to medicine or vitamins as candy.

- Keep all medicines out of reach of children.

How can you tell if your child may have swallowed a poison? He or she may show the following signs:

- Vomiting
- Having a hard time breathing
- Very sleepy or very excited

If you think your child may have been poisoned, stay calm. Try to find the container that the poison was in. Call the Poison Control Center at 1-800-222-1222. If you can, ask your child how much poison they took and when they took it. Do not make the child vomit unless the Poison Control Center tells you to.

Preparing your child for visits to the doctor

When children know they are going to the doctor, many become worried and nervous about the visit. Whether they are going to see their primary care doctor or a specialist for a routine exam, illness or special problem, kids are likely to be afraid.

As a parent, you can help by encouraging you child to express his fears and by addressing them in words that you child understands.

If the visit is for a regular health checkup—or

well-child visit—explain that all healthy children go to the doctor for regular checkups. Explain that the doctor will check on how he or she is growing and will ask questions and examine them to make sure they are healthy.

If the visit is to diagnose or treat an illness, explain that the doctor needs to examine them to find out how to fix the problem and help make them feel better. If your child is going to see the doctor because of an illness or medical condition or is going to visit a

Spotlight on South Houston

F.E.S.tival is a free event that focuses on fun, education and safety. Activities include face painting, music, clowns, balloons, a moonwalk, door prizes and more! Learn about nutrition and exercise, prenatal care, and fire, car seat, bike and home safety. Free health screenings will be available all day, and free immunizations will be given until 12 p.m. **Saturday, April 29, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at South Houston Intermediate School.**

Texas Children's Health Plan is also participating in **Healthy Kids of Pasadena**. Activities will include door prizes, a moonwalk, music and a bike rodeo. Learn about nutrition and exercise, health care coverage, and keeping kids safe at home, in the car and while at play. Free immunizations will be available for children. **Saturday, May 6, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Jackson Intermediate School.**

specialist, you may not know what to expect during the examination. When you call to make the appointment you can ask to speak to the doctor or nurse to find out what will take place during the exam. Then you can explain some of the procedures and their purpose in gentle language appropriate for your child's age level.

Children can cope with pain or discomfort more easily if they're forewarned, and they'll learn to trust you if you're honest with them.

Protect your child with immunizations

All parents want to help their children grow up healthy. One of the best ways to do that is to make sure they get all of their childhood shots at the recommended ages. Here are some frequently asked questions and answers about immunizations.

Q: Why are immunizations so important for babies?

A: These shots protect your child from 11 diseases, including measles, mumps and chicken pox. These diseases still kill un-immunized children every year.

Q: Are vaccinations safe?

A: It's important to remember that children are in much greater danger from the

diseases than from the shots. Serious reactions are rare, but they can happen. Your doctor or nurse will discuss any risks before giving the shots.

Q: How many shots does my child need?

A: Your child needs several doses of each vaccine at different times to be completely protected.

Q: What will happen if my child doesn't get vaccinated?

A: If your child is exposed to any of these diseases, there is a good chance that he or she will get the disease. If your child gets one of these diseases, he or she could also spread it to other children

who are not protected.

Q: What if my child didn't get shots when he or she was supposed to, or is behind schedule?

A: If your child has had some shots, then fell behind schedule, he or she doesn't have to start over. The shots already given will count. Your doctor keeps records of your child's shots and the dates they were given. You should also keep your own records.

Immunizations are a very important tool to protect children. Getting your child immunized on time is one way you can help protect your children from serious diseases.