

Don't let
Asthma

take
your
breath
away

Nationwide
Asthma Screening
Program

ACAAI American College
of Allergy, Asthma
& Immunology
Follow the Leader Into the Future

This program is supported by
AstraZeneca

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ALLERGISTS WARN PARENTS TO WATCH FOR ASTHMA SYMPTOMS IN YOUNG CHILDREN

ARLINGTON HEIGHTS, Ill., May 1, 2007 – Recognizing that asthma is difficult to diagnose in children under age 5, the nation's allergists are alerting parents to the warning signs of the most common chronic childhood disease through a public education initiative and new brochure.

Recognizing Asthma in Your Young Child: Making Sure You Can Both Breathe Easy, developed by the American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology (ACAAI), provides parents and caregivers of infants, toddlers and preschoolers with an overview of asthma. The disease affects an estimated 9 million children.

Symptoms of asthma in young children include:

- Coughing, especially at night
- Whistling or wheezing sounds when a child breathes out
- Labored breathing
- Skin around ribs or neck pulling in tightly when a child tries to breathe
- Frequent colds or other respiratory illnesses

“It’s difficult for parents to know if their child has asthma since so many of these symptoms are very similar to a cold, bronchitis or another infection,” said allergist John Winder, M.D., chair of the Nationwide Asthma Screening Program. “In fact, an illness like a cold can be what’s triggering asthma. It’s important for parents to carefully watch for these symptoms, particularly if they keep recurring. Their child should see a doctor for diagnosis and treatment.”

Asthma is diagnosed based on a medical history, physical examination and a lung function test. Since the lung function test involves blowing forcefully into a tube, it’s usually not used in children under age 6. An allergist, an asthma specialist, is trained to recognize asthma symptoms and differentiate between the disease and other conditions.

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To help increase awareness of pediatric asthma and provide parents with more resources on asthma in young children, the ACAAI is distributing the new brochure and conducting a special initiative through its Nationwide Asthma Screening Program. The program is supported by AstraZeneca and helps identify undiagnosed and undertreated asthma. Since many parents turn to their pharmacists for advice about their children's health, the public education initiative also includes a partnership with the American Pharmacists Association.

When asthma is diagnosed, an allergist may prescribe a medication to control the disease, as well as a quick-relief medication for use during an asthma attack. The allergist also will teach parents how to avoid common asthma triggers, including cigarette smoke, pets or other allergens, and will work with parents to develop an asthma treatment plan.

Recognizing Asthma in Your Young Child: Making Sure You Can Both Breathe Easy will be available at screenings offered through the Nationwide Asthma Screening Program and on the ACAAI's Web site at www.acaai.org. A list of screening locations also is available on the Web site.

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