



Supplementing the Schools; Bringing Asthma Management to After-School Providers

For decades, our local agency has worked to help asthmatic children cope with and manage their disease. In recent years, these efforts have focused on bringing asthma management curricula into local schools. In classrooms from Palo Alto to Hollister, student participants have benefited from fewer asthma attacks, lower school absenteeism, and decreased medical costs/visits. And while this partnership has proven an ideal match, through the innovative STEPS to a Healthier Santa Clara County project, Breathe California has initiated a new approach to bringing critical asthma management classes to children throughout the community.

“We’ve enjoyed a long working relationship with our schools, but as teachers are even more overworked and school nurses are more scarce, it has become harder to coordinate our programs in the classroom,” said Joseph Francis, *Breathe California’s* Asthma Program Coordinator. “So as we looked for ways to supplement our work in the schools, we found that our asthma education curricula could fit very nicely into youth extracurricular programs.”

By partnering with after-school

programs, *Breathe California* found another avenue to reach a captive audience of children. In many cases, these settings were just as ideal of a venue as the classroom. Children spend as much as three to four hours daily in these programs, making it important for them to be prepared to deal with their asthma during this time. Furthermore, these environments are often more physically active than the classroom, as children spend their afternoons participating in outdoor games or on a sports team. These activities present their own particular set of asthma risks, and bringing asthma education to these programs allows the children to better understand how asthma affects them in these unique situations. In addition, after-school youth supervisors are another key group who must be prepared to recognize the signs of an asthma attack and how to respond appropriately.

Thus, in recent months, the agency has spent considerable time working with a number of extracurricular programs. In conjunction with O’Connor Hospital, the agency hosted a series of lectures for youth-intensive

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Our Name Has Changed, But We Have Not!

Breathe California of the Bay Area was formerly known as the American Lung Association of Santa Clara-San Benito Counties. While the local agency is no longer affiliated with the ALA, we continue to fight lung disease and protect lung health in our communities.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!!!

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How to Find and Eliminate Mold

New York Times, October 2, 2005

Mold loves to hide in damp places. Mold will grow anywhere that is affected by a recurrent source of moisture, which can include a roof or plumbing leak. The ideal breeding grounds are often in places you can't even see, such as the insides of walls. While it is not dangerous to everyone, mold can trigger allergic reactions in people with asthma that range from mild to life-threatening.

So, how do you know when you have mold, and what do you do if you have it?

The first clue to identifying mold inside the house is when you begin to suffer from allergies while indoors. If you feel better when you are away from the house, you are probably allergic to something that is inside your home. Of the many possible indoor allergens that can be found in the home, mold is among the most common. Unfortunately, you will often be unable to see mold. However, when it is present, it is common to smell a musty odor.

If you are unsure whether you have mold, there are home tests available that can be purchased in stores or over the Internet for less than \$50. While these tests can tell you whether you have mold in your house, they will not tell you where it is located. Breathe California offers a free service called Master Home Environmentalist® (MHE). A

representative will come into your home to help identify indoor pollutants that may be affecting your air quality. The assessor will then make recommendations on how to best rid your home of the different air contaminants that have been identified, including mold. This is a great program to help those who suspect they may be suffering from air pollutants in their home.

Once you find that you have mold, it must be eliminated. The most important thing to do is to get rid of the moisture that is causing the mold, to prevent more mold from growing in the future. Then, you should take steps to get rid of the mold that you already have. Washing the area with bleach can be effective, but if the area remains exposed to moisture, it might not be enough. In some cases, the wall will have to be opened up to remove part of the wallboard or insulation that has been affected.

Remember, in order to stop any ill effects of mold: first locate all of the mold, then eliminate the source of moisture, and finally, eliminate all of the existing mold.

To find out more about our MHE program, or tips to protect your family from asthma and allergy symptoms in the home, please contact Joseph Francis at (408) 998-5865 or joseph@lungsrus.org

A Special Thanks to Our Sponsors!

Breathe California is proud to partner with a wide array of agencies, corporations and foundations to bring its asthma programs throughout the community. We would like to extend our deepest gratitude to our following sponsors:

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Kaiser-Permanente

The Health Trust

Valley Foundation

STEPS Partnership

Minimizing Child Asthma Hospitalizations

Reuters Health, October 21, 2005

According to results from a new study, hospitalizations among asthmatic children can be reduced through better communication and education.

A study conducted by Dr. Glenn Flores and colleagues from the Medical College of Wisconsin, Milwaukee found that a significant number of childhood asthma hospitalizations could have been prevented. During the case-by-case study, 230 patients were examined and more than 25% were deemed preventable. Among these cases, younger children were at a higher risk for preventable hospitalization than adolescent children.

Among these preventable hospitalizations, the researchers found a lack of communication

between parent and physician to be a common factor. Many of these cases were caused by common medication issues, which could have been avoided if the parent/children had been properly educated by their physician. In addition, failure by parents to schedule follow up care or seek help when experiencing trouble with prescribed medications also contributed to preventable hospitalizations.

“The most important step primary care providers can take to prevent pediatric asthma hospitalizations is to ensure that parents and children are well educated about the child's condition, medications, the need for follow-up care, and the importance of avoiding known disease triggers,” stated Flores.

Join us for our Spring PAC Meeting!!!

Parents of Asthmatic Children (PAC) meetings are held as a resource and support group for families who must confront asthma regularly. At these meetings, we discuss a number of issues related to your child's asthma, including the latest and most relevant news, legislation and asthma management techniques. Parents also have the opportunity to ask questions and network with other families to help their child lead fuller and healthier lives. Dinner will be provided and children are invited. Please join us for our next quarterly meeting:

When: Tuesday, March 21, 2006
6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Where: Breathe California
1469 Park Avenue
San Jose, CA 95126

Topic: Asthma management in the home -
How to control environmental triggers

Speaker: Maria Villanueva, Valley Medical Center
Pediatric pulmonary nurse practitioner and certified asthma educator.



Please RSVP by Monday, March 20 to Joseph Francis at joseph@lungsrus.org or (408) 998-5865. Our PAC Meetings are made possible with the generous support of Kaiser-Permanente.

Bringing Asthma Management to After-School Programs...

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professionals entitled "Optimizing Asthma Control." Throughout the fall, the agency brought asthma education presentations/classes to East Valley YMCA childcare sites and the Mexican American Community Services Agency (MACSA) after-school center. In addition, staff from the 4 C's Council and the San Jose Public Library's after-school program received extensive training on issues pertaining to asthmatic children.

"By working with a wide array of extracurricular programs as well as local schools, we bring a comprehensive approach to educating our children about asthma," continued Francis. "If we can address the many environments and settings that our children spend their time in, we can better ensure that they and their caretakers are prepared to react to the risks associated with asthma attacks."

Get Ready...
Camp is BACK!



July 31– August 4
9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Camp Superstuff is for children ages 6-12 who are suffering from asthma. Campers will learn how to better manage their asthma and will take part in a variety of activities, events & field trips!

For more information on this year's Asthma Camp, please visit www.lungsrus.org or call (408) 998-5865.



GET INVOLVED...

Volunteer!!!



Help Breathe California as it combats asthma! Our school-based asthma education programs are looking for fun & enthusiastic people to participate in and promote our program.

We are seeking volunteers to help:

- Lead Our Asthma Education Classes
- Recruit New Program Partners
- Conduct Outreach to Local School Administrators and PTA's

We are also always in need of people who can help out around our office.

For information on volunteering with Breathe California, please contact Volunteer Coordinator Patricia Tind at (408) 998-5865 or via e-mail at patricia@lungsrus.org.

Join the Asthma Coalition!!!

ASTHMA COALITION *of Santa Clara County*

The Asthma Coalition of Santa Clara County is a local group dedicated to reducing the impact of asthma in our communities. The coalition is comprised of health experts, professionals, and local members of the community. The Asthma Coalition hosts its meetings at the offices of Breathe California on the 2nd Tuesday of every month at 10 a.m.

We are looking for parents who are interested in joining us as we make plans to: increase access to asthma resources, promote asthma awareness, and find new and better techniques to reduce the frequency and severity of asthma attacks.

If you are interested in learning more about the Asthma Coalition of Santa Clara County, contact Joseph Francis at joseph@lungsrus.org or call (408) 998-5865

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