

## **ASTHMA MANAGEMENT IN SCHOOLS**

- Asthma is a chronic lung condition with ongoing tightening (bronchospasm) and inflammation of the airways, or “bronchial tubes”.
- Asthma causes episodes of breathing problems such as coughing, wheezing, chest tightness or shortness of breath.
- The inflammation of asthma causes the lining of the airways to swell and produce more mucus. When this happens, the airways narrow and obstruct the flow of air out of the lungs. Different factors known as asthma triggers can worsen bronchospasm and inflammation.
- Bronchospasm and inflammation make it harder to move air through the airways. The student with asthma works harder and breathes faster to move enough air through these narrowed airways. The student may appear as if he or she had run a race while sitting quietly.

## **WHAT CAUSES AN ASTHMA ATTACK?**

- Asthma attacks are often caused by a student's exposure to a trigger.
- A trigger may be an allergen or an irritant to the respiratory track.
- The most common triggers include:
  - ✓ Respiratory illnesses
  - ✓ Allergens
  - ✓ Weather
  - ✓ Irritants
  - ✓ Emotions
  - ✓ Exercise

## **POSSIBLE ASTHMA ATTACK SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS**

- Becoming anxious or scared
- Shortness of breath
- Rapid, labored breathing
- Incessant coughing
- Nasal flaring
- "Pull in" of neck and chest with breathing
- Tightness in chest
- Wheezing while breathing in or out
- Vomiting from hard coughing
- Unable to talk in full sentences
- Shoulders hunched over
- Sweaty, clammy skin

## **WHAT DO I DO NOW?**

- You should know whether or not the child has asthma
- Know whether or not the child is self-carrying his medication
- If the student self carries, have him use his medication and contact the office
- If the student has medication in the health room, the student should be accompanied to the office or have office staff come to your room with the student's medication
- Administer medication
- Contact parent if no improvement in 10-15 minutes

## **CALL 911 FOR THE FOLLOWING SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS**

- No improvement 15-20 minutes after initial treatment with medication and a parent cannot be reached
- Medications are not available and the student is exhibiting the following:
  - ✓ Wheezing
  - ✓ Incessant coughing
  - ✓ Difficulty breathing
  - ✓ Chest and neck "pulling in" with breathing
  - ✓ Shoulders hunched in
  - ✓ Struggling to breathe
  - ✓ Decreasing or loss of consciousness