

FRESH AIR

Asthma Collaborative Newsletter • Spring 2015

Doctor's Corner

Dear BREATHE supporters,

With the end of winter and the onset of spring, I'd like to discuss certain relevant health issues.

Get Ready to Step Outside!

While many are excited about warmer weather, longer daylight, and beautiful flowers blooming, some need to prepare for the frustrations of allergies triggering their asthma. Before engaging in outdoor activities, be aware of the environment and obvious triggers. Keep in mind that pollen count is lowest early in the morning and in the evening. If you begin having trouble managing your asthma or allergies during springtime, talk with your healthcare provider to create an asthma or allergy management plan to keep you feeling healthy and active.

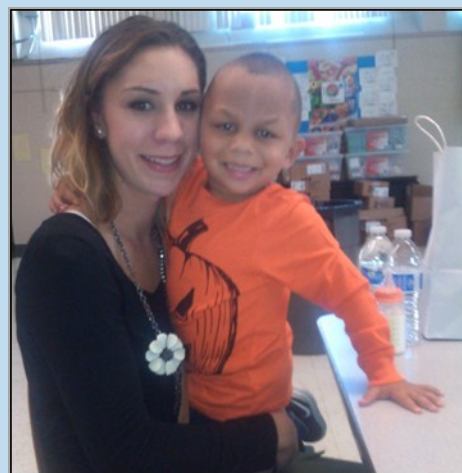
Take Action - Spare the Air

Spare the Air is a campaign that runs from May 1 through October 31 each year, when ozone levels in our region are highest. Ozone, also known as smog, can trigger health problems including chest pain, coughing, throat irritation, and congestion.

Ozone is formed when air pollutants from vehicles and large equipment interact with sunlight. It is lower in the morning and higher in the afternoon and early evening. You can help improve the air quality in your community by driving less.

Air pollution can affect everyone, but people with asthma and other lung diseases are more vulnerable to air pollution's health effects. If you fall into this category, you are considered a "sensitive group," and should avoid outdoor activity when the air quality index is above 100.

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Faces of Asthma: Bianca and Marques

For Bianca, a hard working mother, helping her 3 year old son Marques fight his asthma is a non-negotiable. Having been born a pre-mature baby, Marques has been in and out of the hospital his entire life, struggling with his respiratory issues. Keeping Marques' asthma triggers in mind and through work done with Marques' doctors, Bianca has been able to find a medical regimen of medicine, an inhaler and a nebulizer to "control [Marques' asthma] before it gets scary like when he was younger".

In October 2014, Bianca attended her first SETA Head Start class and was grateful to hear important information about flu shots. She cannot stress enough how important it is to "Get on top of it, if you see your kids coughing definitely ask your doctor [about asthma], just ask!"

Upcoming Parent Asthma Classes

Not sure if you or your child has asthma?

Have questions about how to effectively manage asthma symptoms?

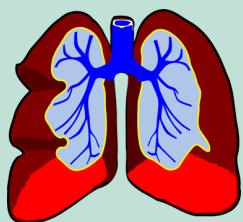
Attend a FREE parent asthma class taught by a member of the Asthma Collaborative!

April 17, 2015: Parent Asthma Class at Vineland Head Start

April 24, 2015: Parent Asthma Class at Strizek Head Start



For more information or to RSVP to a Parent Asthma Class, please contact Katie Valenzuela Garcia at 916-444-5900 ext. 215 or kgarcia@sacbreathe.org



Facts About Asthma

Asthma is a chronic disease with no cure. With proper management, people with asthma can lead full and healthy lives.

Asthma IS NOT contagious.

Asthma symptoms include coughing, wheezing, and difficulty breathing.

Many things can trigger asthma symptoms: exercise, dust, smoke, pets, cold air, and more.

You can ask your doctor for a **Self-Care Plan**. That way you know what to do if your asthma symptoms get worse and how to prevent serious illness.

The best way to manage your asthma is to use a peak flow meter everyday to monitor your breathing and to take your medicine as prescribed by your doctor.

For more resources go to www.sacbreathe.org

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Learn more about air quality and sign up for air quality index alerts at www.sparetheair.com

New Law Requires EpiPens at Schools

Effective January 1, 2015, all schools in California are required to carry EpiPens, which are anti-histamine auto-injectors that could save the life of someone having a severe allergic reaction.

Symptoms of a severe allergic reaction include difficulty breathing, loud wheezing, difficulty swallowing, or any serious respiratory issue.

The medication in an EpiPen only lasts 10-15 minutes, so it is critical to call 911 as soon as a severe allergic reaction begins. Keep the person calm by having them lie down and cover them with a blanket. The law only allows medical professionals or trained volunteers to administer the EpiPen shot to students when necessary.

Contact your school site administrator if you have questions about EpiPens in your child's school. If your child has serious allergies, your doctor or pharmacist can instruct you on the proper use of EpiPens in case of an emergency.

Thank you for reading my advice. I hope you have learned a bit more about how to stay healthy and happy!

Sincerely,

Arif Seyal MD

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North Valley, Kaiser Permanente
Chair, Asthma Collaborative