

DID YOU KNOW?

HEALTH ED 101

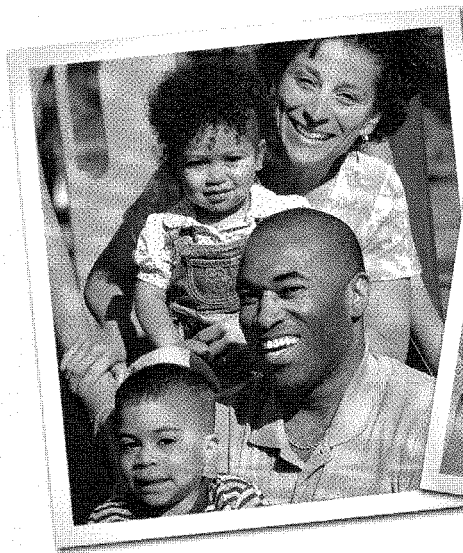
For Parents

Health Ed 101 is an informative series from Merck, in partnership with Scholastic, to help promote health in children.

What is asthma?

Asthma is a chronic condition. That means once a child has it, he or she is likely to have it for life. Having asthma is no one's fault. The airways of children (and adults) with asthma are sensitive and can become swollen. Even when a child does not have asthma symptoms, the underlying condition is there, ready to cause symptoms.

Related story: Common asthma triggers (see reverse side).



Among chronic diseases, asthma is a major cause of missed school days for children 5 to 17 years old.

Asthma affects more than 6 million children and is a major health problem in the United States. So it's not unusual for parents to think asthma will hold a child back. Perhaps you've seen asthma cause a child to miss school, or get in the way of a child trying to enjoy a bike ride or play in a backyard game of soccer.

If you have a child with asthma, health experts recommend teaming up with your child's doctor to develop an asthma action plan.



Together, you can work toward helping to prevent your child's asthma symptoms before they start, so your child can enjoy:

- More physical activity
- Fewer asthma symptoms
- Fewer missed days of school
- Fewer emergency room visits
- More nights without asthma symptoms

By learning to avoid triggers and recognize symptoms (coughing, wheezing, shortness of breath, or chest tightness) and by following "the doctor's orders" on proper treatment, you can help control your child's asthma symptoms and your child can do more of the things he or she wants to do.

Related story: Daily controller medicines (see reverse side).

When coughing wakes a child with asthma more than 2 nights a month, it's a sign that asthma may not be under control.