**Think Your Child Might Have Asthma? Take These Steps.**

Does your child sometimes wheeze? Are they short of breath? If so, they may need to see a health care provider to determine if they have asthma. Asthma affects the airways, or tubes, that carry air in and out of the lungs. In people with asthma, inhaling an irritant causes the airways to become inflamed and the airway muscles to tighten, making it harder to breathe.

Asthma is the most common long-term health condition in children, affecting about 5 million kids in the United States. It usually starts before age 5. Asthma impacts some groups of children more than others. For example, boys are more likely than girls to be diagnosed with it. Black, Puerto Rican, and Native American children are more likely than white children to have asthma.

Poorly controlled asthma can cause kids to miss school or even end up in the hospital. The good news is that with the right management, most kids with asthma can lead healthy, active lives. Here are several things you can do if you think your child has asthma:

**Look out for common signs and symptoms of asthma.** These include coughing, wheezing, chest tightness and shortness of breath. According to the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI), up to 40% of children who wheeze when they get colds or respiratory infections eventually get diagnosed with asthma. Notice when and where your child has symptoms. Do the symptoms interrupt your child's sleep? Do they occur during a specific time of the day? Do exercise, allergies or illness make them worse?

**If your child’s symptoms persist, see a health care provider.** The health care provider may ask about your child’s medical history and symptoms and do a physical exam. They may also conduct tests to measure your child’s breathing.

**Work with the doctor to develop an asthma action plan if your child is diagnosed with asthma.** This is important. The plan will help you track medicines, monitor symptoms and changes, and understand when emergency care is necessary.

**Learn about the triggers that can bring on an asthma attack.** Try to avoid the triggers that make your child’s symptoms worse. These may includethings that cause allergies – such as pets, pollen, mold and dust – or cold or low-quality air, infections such as the flu, and tobacco smoke.

Your family and health care provider can work together to control your child’s asthma and keep your child doing the activities they love.

Find asthma information and resources from NHLBI’s *Learn More Breathe Better*® program at [www.nhlbi.nih.gov/breathebetter](https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/BreatheBetter).