



## Activity Plans for Children with Asthma

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### Plan for Staying Active (for Children)

Even with asthma, you can play and take part in many activities – including sports – like other kids.

Many kids with asthma cough or wheeze when they exercise, run, or play hard. This does not have to happen. Your asthma medicine will help you be active without coughing or wheezing. Some kids keep asthma symptoms from starting if they take a certain asthma medicine right before they start their activity. Talk to your doctor about this.

It also helps you feel good while you are active if you do stretching exercises ("warm up" and "cool down") before and after your activity. Here is a plan to help you be active:

- List the things you do now to stay active.
- List the things you'd like to try.
- Check off things you'll do to be more active.

#### Physical Activities I Do Now

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**Physical Activities I'd Like to Try**

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**To Be Active I Will:**

*Check here*

- Talk to my parent(s) about an activity I would like to do
- Try the activity to see if I can do it without wheezing
- Show my parent(s) how much I can do without wheezing
- Talk to my parents and my doctor about taking medicine before I begin to exercise. This will keep asthma attacks or episodes from starting.
- Take a break from the activity if I feel I may start wheezing. Follow my asthma control plan.
- Talk to teachers and coaches about my asthma. Ask them to help me stay active.

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**How To Set Appropriate Guidelines for Your Child's Activities**

The ideas in the list that follows may help you keep your child active and healthy.

1. Before setting any limits, look at what your child can already do. Try to help your child do more. Do not make up rules that might hold him or her back without good reason.
2. Base any limits you set on what has really happened with your child. Do not base it on what you think might happen or on what might be true for others with asthma. No child with asthma is the same. Each

child has different levels of physical fitness and maturity. Aim toward setting fewer or no limits and letting your child have more responsibility.

3. Discuss the limits you think are right with your child. Try to agree on limits that both of you can accept.
4. Discuss disagreements or doubts with your doctor so that he or she can help decide if the rules are necessary for your child.
5. Practice and review with your child those things that can help to manage an asthma episode if he or she accidentally goes beyond his or her limits.
6. To help your child do more, find specific ways to protect him or her from those things that can trigger asthma. For example, if your child is allergic to animal dander and wants to visit a friend who has a dog, have your child take asthma medicine before the visit or have the friend come to your house. Your child should not touch the animal.

Other suggestions: \_\_\_\_\_

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## **Talking to Others About Asthma**

It is important to talk about asthma to others. Family, friends, and teachers or coworkers can give you a lot of support if they know the facts and how they can help.

### **When You Talk About Asthma to Others**

- Do not make a big deal out of it, and do not encourage people to feel sorry for you.
- Explain that a person whose asthma is under control can perform just like other people.
- Explain that you know how to take care of asthma when you are having symptoms.
- Describe the steps you take to prevent and control symptoms. Tell them what, if anything, you would like them to do to help.
- Choose the right time to tell each person about asthma. For instance,
  - Tell teachers and coaches at the beginning of the school year.
  - Tell friends and coworkers in private, and when you are not having symptoms.

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