Note to Parents

Asthma is a serious and unpredictable disease. Asthma symptoms vary from one day to the next and may seem mild, but they can flare up and become severe very quickly. Understanding asthma and how to manage it can help decrease the number and severity of your child’s asthma flare-ups.

For a young child, having asthma can be very scary. Helping your child learn more about their asthma can help make them less afraid and better able to manage their asthma when a flare-up does occur.

Asthma Detectives has been written to help your child better understand asthma. Your child will learn important information on how to manage asthma and how to control asthma symptoms.

What you can do:
* Read along with your child. The activities marked with a are designed to reinforce what they are learning. Highlighted words are explained on the “Words to Know” page (p. 19) at the end of the story.
* Talk to your child’s doctor if you have questions about anything you learn in this book. You, your child, and the doctor are the best team for making decisions about your child’s asthma management.

OK, are you ready? Let’s help your child “get a clue” to asthma management with Asthma Detectives!
Jenny can’t wait to share this book with her 5-year-old brother Johnny. She wants Johnny to do some of the fun things she did in school today. Jenny wants Johnny to have fun learning about his asthma. She doesn’t want him to be sick every day.

Do you want to be an “Asthma Detective”? Read this book and help Johnny find the clues to learn more about asthma.

You, too, can earn your “Asthma Detective” badge. Have fun!
Johnny needs to learn more about asthma. Can you help him find the right word? Use the list below for clues.

1. Asthma makes it hard for you to [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ].

2. Common asthma symptoms are [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] and wheezing.

3. Sometimes symptoms can wake you up at [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ].

4. Lots of kids and [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] have asthma.

5. If [ ] [ ] [ ] take care of your [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ], you can have lots of fun with few symptoms.

What Is Asthma and Who Gets It?

Johnny is excited about earning his "Asthma Detective" badge. He wants to start RIGHT NOW. Jenny sits down with Johnny and they begin.

Johnny knows who gets asthma. He remembers the doctor telling him that kids AND grown-ups get asthma and that you can’t “catch” it from someone else. But he doesn’t remember what asthma is.

Jenny tells him it is a problem with his lungs that makes it hard for him to breathe. She tells him that on some days he might not have any problems breathing. On other days, common asthma symptoms like coughing and wheezing might make it hard to breathe. This is called an asthma flare-up.

Johnny remembers when he had an asthma flare-up. It was hard for him to breathe, and the coughing woke him up at night. It wasn't much fun.
What Happens When You Take a Breath?

Jenny shows Johnny a picture of some lungs. Then she talks to him about what happens when he takes a breath.

Jenny and Johnny breathe together. She tells him when he breathes in, the air goes in through his nose and mouth. Then the air goes down his throat and into his lungs through breathing tubes called airways. When he breathes out, the air goes back through the breathing tubes, up his throat, and out his nose and mouth.

It is easy for air to go in and out of the lungs when the tubes are open.

Do You Breathe the Same When You Have Asthma?

In school, Jenny and Susie learned that when you have asthma you do not breathe the same. They learned that two things happen to the breathing tubes when you have asthma:

* The insides of the breathing tubes become red and swollen and fill up with mucus.
* The muscles around the breathing tubes tighten up and make the tubes smaller.

Now the breathing tubes are too small for air to move in and out easily. That is why it is hard for you to breathe with asthma.

Can you show Johnny what is different about healthy lungs and lungs during an asthma flare-up? Color the inside of breathing tubes where air goes in and out of your lungs blue. Look at the picture again. Circle the lungs that are having an asthma flare-up.
Can you help Johnny’s sister show him one way to help take care of himself? Follow the numbers and connect the dots.

**Taking Care of Asthma**

Jenny and Susie also found out that kids with asthma can help take care of themselves. They learned that kids can...

- learn about what makes their asthma worse
- take their medicine just like the doctor says
- follow their Asthma Action Plan
- use their peak flow meter
- listen to the doctor and their family to take care of their asthma

Johnny asks Jenny to tell him more about how to take care of his asthma.

Keep reading to learn more about how you can help take care of your asthma.
What Makes Your Asthma Worse?

Jenny tells Johnny about her friend Sam. Sam has asthma and told the class that dogs, cats, smoke, and dust make his asthma worse. Sometimes in the summer, pollen and grass make his asthma flare up. Things that make Sam’s asthma worse are called triggers.

Jenny read that both kids and grown-ups have asthma triggers and that everyone’s triggers are different.

The best way to stop triggers from making your asthma worse is to stay away from them. Talk to your doctor about how to stay away from your triggers. Ask a grown-up to help.

Johnny knows his triggers. Help him find them in the word puzzle. Use the list below for clues.

AKIEPSPOLLENENAZNEOURWPETSRGUGRDSJ
VWNTXRJLTWCMZPHW
SCDHDDRASSSOULTE
HSUOBLLGSDGCFLNSA
EQSETHFBTVESIDPT
CVTIUDTNPRPOPS
AFWGLKLEVLMRGKE
CKTOYPBQYGIABDKR
RPMLIAEKEYRSBJ
KCALERKOMSOKSKLNB
CRRGFCRGANGKRRSSH

PETS
COLDS
SPRAYS
DUST
GRASS
POLLEN
MOLD
SMOKE
WEATHER
What Asthma Medicines Help kids and Grown-ups?

While Johnny was thinking about his triggers, his mother came in to give him his medicine. She reminded him of what his doctor said.

There are two different kinds of medicine that you take when you have asthma. One is called controller medicine, and the other is called quick-relief or rescue medicine.

Johnny’s doctor told him that his controller medicine would help keep his asthma symptoms under control. The doctor reminded Johnny to take his controller medicine every day. The doctor told him to take his quick-relief medicine if he has asthma symptoms so they don’t get worse.

There are many ways to take asthma medicine. Johnny uses an inhaler to take both his controller medicine and his quick-relief medicine. Whenever Johnny uses his quick-relief medicine, he circles the days on the calendar and writes down how many times he used it so he can tell his doctor if he uses it more than two times a week.

Remember: Always check with a grown-up before you take any medicine. They can help make sure you take the right one.

Can you help Johnny remember what he learned about his asthma medicine? Help him fill in the answers to the crossword puzzle. Complete the sentences at the bottom of the page for clues.

Across:
2. You use your quick-________ medicine if you have asthma symptoms so they don’t get worse.
3. Use a __________ to keep track of the days when you use your quick-relief medicine.
6. The kind of medicine that is usually taken every day to control asthma symptoms is called a ________.
7. Asthma __________ are things that you feel, like wheezing or coughing, when your asthma flares up.

Down:
1. Things like pets or smoke that can make your asthma worse are called ____________.
4. The _____________ is the best person to tell you how and when to take your asthma medicine.
5. A disease of the lungs that makes it hard to breathe is called ____________.

Always check with a grown-up before you take any medicine. They can help make sure you take the right one.
What Is the Asthma Action Plan?

Johnny has an Asthma Action Plan. His doctor gave it to his mom at his last check-up. The plan tells him what to do when he has asthma symptoms. The Asthma Action Plan has three parts called “zones.”

The zones are like a traffic light.

**GREEN** zone means — go: your breathing is good. No symptoms.

**YELLOW** zone means — caution: you are having asthma symptoms.

**RED** zone means — stop — danger: your asthma symptoms are bad. Breathing is hard. Get help NOW.

The doctor wrote down what Johnny should do and which asthma medicine he should take for each zone.

Do you remember what asthma symptoms are? Look below for some common symptoms. Can you circle your asthma symptoms?

* wheezing
* a cough
* waking up at night
* chest feels tight or it is hard to take a deep breath
* coughing up stuff from your lungs

Do You Use a Peak Flow Meter?

Johnny told Jenny that he uses his peak flow meter every morning when he wakes up just like the doctor said. The doctor told him that the peak flow meter measures how well air moves out of the lungs. If the peak flow number goes down, it may be a sign that his asthma is flaring up. The doctor wrote down in each zone of Johnny’s Asthma Action Plan what to do if his peak flow number goes down.

Can you measure your peak flow number? Here’s a clue: follow along with Johnny, step-by-step, to find your peak flow number.

1. Stand or sit up straight.
2. Slide the little marker to 0.
3. Take a deep breath.
4. Put your mouth around the tube or mouthpiece.
5. Blow out one time as hard as you can like you are blowing out candles on a birthday cake.
6. Find the number the marker stopped on.
7. Write it down in this book.

Do this two more times. Now, circle the biggest number. This is your peak flow number.

1. ________
2. ________
3. ________
Can You Take Care of Your Asthma?

Jenny grabs a magnifying glass to help Johnny travel through the Taking Care of Asthma Maze. Before he starts, they talk about how they learned to take care of his asthma so he can have fun and not get sick.

Here is what they learned:

* Visit your doctor. Ask your doctor when you need to come back.
* Take your asthma medicine like the doctor tells you. Ask your doctor what medicine to take and what time to take it.
* Learn to stay away from your asthma triggers.
* Follow the Asthma Action Plan that your doctor gave you. Share it with your teachers, coaches, and babysitters.
* Tell your friends and family how you are taking care of yourself. Your family and friends can help you stay healthy.

Can you help Johnny find his way through the Taking Care of Asthma Maze? Here is a clue: Look at the list above. Start at the magnifying glass. Then, follow the maze until you find everything on the list. When you find your family and friends, you have made it through the maze.
Johnny had a lot of fun being an “Asthma Detective” with his sister Jenny.

GUESS WHAT? Johnny is getting a prize. Do you know what it is? You’re right. Jenny is giving Johnny his own “Asthma Detective” badge.

Jenny is going to help Johnny take care of his asthma. She wants him to stay healthy every day and have lots of fun, too.

Did you earn your “Asthma Detective” badge? Check your answers to the clues on page 20 of this book. Then, follow the steps below for your “Asthma Detective” badge. Good Job!

1. Color the “Asthma Detective” badge on the inside back cover.
2. Cut on the dotted line.
3. Now pin on your “Asthma Detective” badge. You earned it!

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Words to Know

Airways - These are tubes that allow air to go in and out of your lungs. They carry air from your nose and mouth all the way down in your lungs. Airways are sometimes called breathing tubes.

Asthma - This is a disease of the lungs that sometimes makes it hard for you to breathe.

Asthma Action Plan - This is a written plan the doctor gives you that tells you what to do to take care of your asthma. It tells you which medicine to take and when to take it. It also helps you know when to get help.

Asthma flare-up - This is when it is hard to breathe and you have asthma symptoms like wheezing and coughing.

Breathe - This is what you do to get fresh air into your lungs and used air out of your lungs.

Controller medicine - This is the kind of medicine you take every day to keep from having asthma symptoms. Your doctor will tell you how and when you should take your controller medicine.

Coughing - This is what you do to get rid of mucus in your airways or breathing tubes.

Lungs - These are a part of the body used for breathing. They are in your chest on each side of your heart.

Medicine - This is something you take to make you better.

Mucus - This is thick, sticky stuff made by your lungs when your asthma is bad. It makes it hard to breathe. Sometimes you might cough up mucus.

Peak flow meter - This is a hand-held device that measures how well air moves out of your lungs.

Quick-relief or rescue medicine - This is the kind of medicine you take when you first have asthma symptoms like coughing and wheezing. It works fast to help you breathe easier.

Symptoms - Symptoms are things that you feel like wheezing and coughing.

Triggers - These are things like dust, pets, or smoke that make your asthma worse. Everyone’s triggers are different.

Wheezing - This is a whistling noise when you breathe.