



Asthma Triggered by a Cold

If a child has asthma, one of the most common causes for an asthma attack is getting a cold (also called an upper airway respiratory infection, or URI.) In fact, up to 80% of asthma attacks are triggered by colds. Many viruses can cause the common cold, but some of the worst asthma attacks are caused by influenza – the flu. This is why we strongly recommend immunization against the flu every year.

Catching Colds

Small children, especially if they are regularly exposed to other children, get colds all the time. Twelve illnesses a year seems to be about average for a young child. Frankly, there is not much you can do to keep your child from getting colds, especially since URIs are most contagious a day before anyone knows the child is sick! But here are some measures you can try, if you find them practical:

- Keep your child away from people you know are sick.
- Have your child wash his or her hands often.
- Make sure you are up to date on all vaccinations, including the flu vaccine, since many of the illnesses which vaccines prevent can cause very bad asthma attacks.

What to do if your child gets a cold

- Recognize the progressive symptoms of a cold. In the first couple days the child's nose is filled with watery nasal secretions. Later, these secretions often become thicker, usually turning yellow or green. ***Antibiotics are not needed for colds***, since they are caused by viruses, and viruses are not affected by antibiotics.
- A child with a cold should drink plenty of fluids.
- If there are symptoms of asthma with the cold, you should follow your asthma action plan, and make an appointment to come into the office. We will evaluate the degree of illness and make sure you can follow the right route.
- If your child seems to be severely ill and it is at a time when our office is not open, you might need to take him or her to the emergency room. Emergency symptoms could include difficulty speaking, looking anxious, breathing too rapidly or too hard, or lethargy.

We pledge not only to care for you, but to care about you.