

Management of Asthma — Instructors' /Coaches' Checklist for Participants with Asthma

- Step 1: Establish a process to identify children and youth with asthma.**
 - Know which children and youth have asthma and/or use asthma medicine.
 - » Have parents/guardians complete a registration form that asks explicitly whether or not their child has asthma or uses asthma medicines.
- Step 2: Allow children and youth with asthma easy access to asthma medication.**
 - Make sure children and youth have the right inhaler with them at all times and that it is full and not expired. Help participants get the most out of their medication — encourage using a spacer with their spray inhalers!
 - » Medications should not be shared! If participants are having problems or are out of medication, they need to be seen by their health care provider.
 - Know which participants require assistance to use their inhaler.
 - Be prepared to assist a participant with asthma with his or her inhaler when needed.
- Step 3: Establish a process for handling worsening asthma.**
 - Have a completed *Asthma Management Plan* form for each child/youth with asthma with you, and provide easy access to it for other staff and volunteers. Also, have older participants keep a copy with them in their bag. This form outlines the steps for handling worsening asthma and when to seek urgent medical attention.
 - Know how to handle worsening asthma or an asthma flare-up. (Review the Ontario Lung Association's poster, *Managing Asthma Attacks*, in Appendix 3.)
 - » Do not leave a participant having an asthma attack alone.
 - » Never encourage a child who has any asthma symptoms (e.g., coughing, shortness of breath, wheezing, chest tightness) to continue the activity.
- Step 4: Identify and reduce exposure to common asthma triggers.**
 - Know the participants' asthma triggers and be aware of potential triggers that could affect their performance (poor air quality, strong scents/fumes/vapours, dust, freshly mowed grass, extremes in weather).
 - Notify children and youth and their parents/guardians well in advance of activities and off-site trips so that they can be prepared to manage potential triggers. Ensure that reliever inhalers (usually blue) are easily accessible and that you know how to handle worsening asthma. Bring copies of your participants' *Asthma Management Plan* forms on off-site excursions.
- Step 5: Encourage children and youth with asthma to participate in physical and recreational activities and competitive sports.**
 - Start open communication with participants and their parents about asthma and their needs for support to manage asthma early. Make sure that you understand when it is time for the participant to take a break so that asthma flare-ups/attacks can be managed before they become emergencies.
 - Assess whether or not indoor/outdoor environmental triggers exist to support participants' involvement in the activity.
 - Permit use of reliever inhaler (usually blue) 10 to 15 minutes prior to activity, if directed by the participant's health care provider.

Step 6: Provide opportunities for asthma education (e.g., for staff, coaches, parents/guardians and volunteers).

- Continue to learn about asthma.
 - » Use asthma resources created by leading community and professional organizations to learn more about asthma.

Step 7: Collaborate with others (e.g., health care providers, parents/guardians, coaches and program leaders) to create an asthma friendly environment (setting/program).

- Inform parents/guardians when their child show signs of poorly controlled and/or worsening asthma.
- Consult parents/guardians if you have questions about a participant's asthma and, if age appropriate, speak directly to the participant about his or her asthma.