On the move with asthma

Staying active is a big part of a healthy lifestyle. But it’s not always easy to exercise if doing so brings on an asthma attack.

Exercise-induced asthma, or exercise-induced bronchoconstriction (EIB), can present symptoms like coughing, wheezing, and tightness in the chest within five to 20 minutes after starting to exercise.

The good news is that you can take steps to help lower your risk of having an exercise-induced asthma attack.

In fact, physical activity can help you build up a tolerance for exercise, which can help lower your risk of having asthma problems when you’re active.

Before you begin any type of exercise program, though, it’s important that you talk with your doctor first.

Once you’ve received the OK from your doctor, try these tips for safely exercising with asthma:

- Take your asthma medications before you start exercising. Also, allow yourself plenty of time to warm up before beginning any activity.
- Try doing low-intensity activities that are less likely than more intense ones to bring on an asthma attack. Swimming or walking are good choices. If you do want to try more vigorous activities—such as running—gradually increase your intensity over time.
- Rest when you need to.
- Avoid exercising when asthma triggers are present, such as cold air or pollution.
- Take time to cool down after you’re done exercising. A warm bath or shower may also help.

Sources: American Council on Exercise; Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America

Log in to your accessRMHP account to find helpful articles related to exercise-induced asthma, including a list of recommended sports and activities.
School will soon be back in session, and it’s important for children to go through their health check routines, including the basic physical and the dental checkup. But did you know that the American Academy of Ophthalmology recommends making a vision screening part of kids’ back-to-school routines? The reason: Good vision is key to school success. In fact, if your kids aren’t performing as you’d expect, trouble seeing may be to blame. As many as 60 percent of kids believed to have learning problems actually just have vision problems no one knows about, according to the American Optometric Association.

Vision screenings at school can help spot problems; however, they should not take the place of a complete eye exam.

August is Children’s Eye Health and Safety Month

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Now you can get answers to your common urgent health care questions on the go with the new MyDigitalMD app, available for download today at the App Store. The free RMHP service can help you avoid the long waits and higher costs associated with urgent care centers and emergency rooms.

Text or video chat with Colorado-based, board-certified emergency medicine doctors to discuss minor health concerns, get necessary prescriptions, and receive follow-up instructions.

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During the long days of summer, it’s natural to think about watering your lawn and garden and giving water to your pets. But what about your need for water?

Getting plenty of fluids every day is essential for good health. Water is in every cell in the body. It helps regulate body temperature, cushions and lubricates joints, protects sensitive tissues, and assists the digestive system.

Most people can meet their need for water by drinking when they are thirsty and consuming fluids with meals. But with hot weather, vigorous physical activity, or an illness, your body needs even more water.

The need for hydration

You need water to replace what your body loses through everyday functions—such as sweating, going to the bathroom, and exhaling. It’s essential to replace lost fluids to avoid becoming dehydrated.

Among the symptoms of dehydration are dry mouth, weakness, and dizziness. In athletes, dehydration may also lead to muscle cramps.

Being thirsty is a signal that your body is already on the way to being dehydrated. It is important to drink fluids even before signs of thirst appear and to drink more than your thirst demands.

Getting plenty of fluids the healthy way

When quenching your thirst, take care in choosing what you drink. While beverages such as soda and sports drinks do contain water, they are also high in sugar and calories.

Along with water, other healthy choices for keeping well-hydrated include:

- Fat-free or low-fat milk.
- Unsweetened, 100 percent fruit juices.
- Unsweetened iced tea or coffee.
- Fruits and vegetables with a high water content, such as watermelons, grapefruits, apples, lettuce, broccoli, and carrots.

When you do choose water, you can give it a kick by adding a wedge of lemon or lime.

Individual water needs vary widely, depending on factors such as physical activity, exposure to heat, and age. Some people need to restrict fluids because of health conditions. Be sure to talk with your doctor about the amount of water you need each day.

Sources: American Council on Exercise; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; International Food Information Council Foundation
Each year, Coloradans rely on prescription medications to help with illness, procedure recovery, and pain. Unfortunately, individuals who no longer need their medications, or who did not have a prescription in the first place, are abusing prescription drugs. Recent research shows that the problem is growing, and it’s possible that someone you know is affected by prescription drug abuse.

The Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention Program of Peer Assistance Services, funded by the Colorado Office of Behavioral Health, compiled the following 2013 statistics to provide a clear picture of the problem facing the state:

- In 2013, 1.6 people died every day from unintentional drug poisoning.
- In 2013, 35 percent of the drug poisoning deaths in Colorado were due to opioid analgesics, or painkillers.
- According to the 2013 National Survey on Drug Use & Health, 5.08 percent of Coloradans reported using pain relievers in a nonmedical capacity in the past year.
- The 2013 Healthy Kids Colorado Survey revealed that one in seven Colorado high school students (13.6 percent) had taken a prescription medication without a doctor’s prescription one or more times during their life.

In 2013, more people in Colorado died from poisoning due to opioid analgesics (295) than from drunk-driving related fatalities (134).

Know the numbers behind prescription drug abuse

RMHP pharmacists are here to help you with questions about your current medications. Call 800-641-8921 today with any questions, or log in to accessRMHP at rmhp.org to find helpful articles relating to prescription drugs.

Source: Peer Assistance Services, Inc. (peerassistanceservices.org)