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Summer Newsletter

Tampa Bay Asthma Coalition



Introducing the Newly-Formed Tampa Bay Asthma Coalition

The Environmental Protection Commission of Hillsborough County is pleased to introduce the newly-formed Tampa Bay Asthma Coalition (TBAC). Funded through a grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Coalition is a community-based, voluntary health collaborative dedicated to improving the quality of life for persons with asthma. Coalition members include USF College of Public Health, St. Josephs Children's Hospital, Hillsborough Community College, Hillsborough County Health Department, Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America, American Lung Association, Take Charge Lifestyle Management and Steps to a Healthier Hillsborough.

How's the Air?

**Find out by calling
EPC's Air Quality
Index hotline at
813.627.2626**

Through education and outreach, TBAC helps to bring effective self-management to those with asthma, including efforts to reduce asthma triggers in the environment, thus reducing the burden of asthma and improving air quality for everyone. We welcome new members to our coalition and hope to increase public awareness of the growing incidence of asthma in our community. For additional information, please contact Debbie Price at 813.627.2600, ext. 1289 or Barbara Motte at 813.627.2600, ext 1008. You may also e-mail the Coalition at tbac@epchc.org.

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Need Some Reasons to Quit Smoking?

Kids, Asthma, and Second Hand Smoke

by Dotti Groover

Most people understand the negative effects that smoking can have on their own health, including an increased risk of heart attacks and lung cancer, but often need some extra motivation to quit smoking. Understanding the effects that second hand smoke has on our kids may help a person give up the smoking habit for good.

Fortunately, most mothers-to-be, understand the negative effect that smoking during pregnancy may have on their unborn baby. These effects can include having a small or underweight baby, and possibly having a baby with abnormal lung function.



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World Asthma Day

The Coalition Makes it's Public Debut

The Tampa Bay Asthma Coalition (TBAC) participated in World Asthma Day on May 1 by displaying an asthma information booth at the University Health Clinic. Many respiratory therapy students from Hillsborough Community College (HCC) also had asthma information tables around the county to offer lung function tests and to answer questions on asthma.



Students from HCC's respiratory therapy program team up in the community to help spread the word about World Asthma Day.



Dotti Groover, Mavis Cartwright, and Margaret Rush from TBAC at University Health clinic.

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Steps to a Healthier Hillsborough, is a local program that offers Smoking Cessation Classes and Asthma Management programs.

Please visit www.mysteps.org and call (813) 247-STEP for more information about local classes.

For additional help, call the Florida QUITLINE at 1-877-822-6669

Mothers who smoke are also more likely to have a premature baby and according to the American Academy of Pediatrics, babies who are exposed to cigarette smoke while in the womb, may experience long-term cognitive and behavioral problems including lower intelligence, attention deficit disorder, and hyperactivity, once born.

Although one may stop smoking during pregnancy, many mothers do start smoking again after the baby is born. Postnatal exposure to smoke, also called second hand smoke, is very dangerous and poses serious health risks to children.

Exposure to second hand smoke is thought to increase a child's chance of having ear infections, allergies, asthma, wheezing, pneumonia, and frequent upper respiratory tract infections.

Smoke can trigger asthma attacks in many children. Smoke-triggered asthma attacks are often worse for asthmatic children compared to those asthmatic children who are not exposed to second hand smoke. It's important to not smoke inside your home, your car, or any other place that your children will be directly exposed to the smoke.

Studies have shown that children of a parent, or parents that smoke, are more likely to start smoking when they get older. Do you want your kids to have an increased risk of lung cancer or heart attacks because they learned to smoke from you? If you won't quit for yourself, quit for your kids. *Source: Vincent Iannelli, MD American Academy of Pediatrics/EPA*



CFC-Free Inhalers: Time to Make the Switch ***Submitted by American Lung Association***

What Is Albuterol?

Albuterol is a type of drug known as a short-acting beta2-agonist. It quickly relaxes and opens airways and relieves asthma symptoms. This is a quick-relief medicine that only lasts about four hours. It does not prevent asthma attacks.



Why Are CFC Inhalers Being Phased Out?

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has told makers of albuterol inhalers that they must stop using the ozone-depleting propellants called chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), which send albuterol into the lungs. Manufacturers have already begun to make or ramp up production of CFC-free inhalers, also called hydrofluoroalkane (HFA) inhalers, in advance of the December 31, 2008 deadline.

What Should I Do?

Some people have already switched over to the new HFA inhalers, either because they want to get comfortable with the new product or because their CFC inhaler is no longer available. Since everyone who uses an albuterol inhaler will have to stop using CFC inhalers by the end of 2008, now is a good time to speak with your physician about making the change. To get an HFA inhaler, you'll need your doctor to write a new prescription—your pharmacist can't simply substitute the new inhaler for your existing CFC inhaler prescription.

The FDA has found that HFA inhalers are safe and effective, and patients should not find any significant differences from their CFC inhalers. But it is possible that some patients might find that the new inhalers have a slightly different taste or feel. Since all HFA inhalers do not contain the same inactive ingredients, you may want to try out more than one kind in advance of the deadline to find the one you are most comfortable with.

Will I See a Price Difference?

There can be a significant price difference between the CFC inhalers and the new HFA inhalers, particularly if you currently use a generic CFC inhaler. The HFA inhalers cost from \$30 to \$60, compared with \$5 to \$25 for a generic CFC inhaler. The price difference is most likely to have an impact on patients without health insurance.

If you have questions about the transition to HFA inhalers or to learn about assistance programs that may help you pay for your prescriptions, including a coupon offer, call the American Lung Association Lung HelpLine at 1-800-LUNG-USA, and press "2" to speak to a nurse or respiratory therapist.

How Can I Reduce My Dependence on Albuterol Inhalers?

Since albuterol inhalers are not meant to control asthma in the long term, if you are using your inhaler more than two to three times a week, it means your asthma is not being properly controlled.

"If you are using your albuterol inhaler more frequently than this, talk to your doctor about taking inhaled steroids, which are recommended by the National Institutes of Health for controlling asthma," says Dr. Edelman. Inhaled steroids reduce the airway swelling that makes asthma attacks more likely. It is important to see your doctor regularly if you have asthma. Over time, you may need to increase or lower your dose of medicine, or change the type of medicine you take. Work with your doctor to find the best treatment to control your asthma.

*The Air That Children Breathe
Can Make a Difference...*

Second Hand Smoke



Dust and Dust Mites



Pets



Molds



Pests



**Fumes, Odors, Sprays
and Air Pollution**



Asthma may be triggered by allergens and irritants that are common in all homes. Help your child breathe easier by staying in touch with your doctor and by reducing these asthma triggers in and around your home.

Air Cleaning Devices

Submitted by Greg Rottler, HC Health Department

The Hillsborough County Health Department receives a number of inquiries from the public about indoor air quality issues. Some calls concern the effectiveness of air cleaning devices. Air cleaners are commonly sold with claims of improving air quality by reducing levels of indoor air pollutants, including asthma triggers such as dust and mold spores. EPA produces several documents about air cleaners that are good references to provide to the public. The information below was taken from EPA's document, "Residential Air Cleaning Devices: A Summary of Available Information."

In choosing an air cleaner, several factors should be considered. These include:

- The need for routine maintenance, including cleaning and replacement of filters and sorbents.
- The installation requirements (e.g., power, access).
- The manufacturer's recommended operating procedures.
- The possible production or redispersal of pollutants, such as ozone, particles, formaldehyde, and trapped gaseous pollutants.
- The inability of air cleaners designed for particle removal to control gases and some odors, such as those from tobacco smoke.
- Possible health effects from charged particles produced by ion generators.
- Possible soiling of surfaces by charged particles produced by ion generators.
- The noise level at the air flow rates that will be used.

Upcoming Events:

Miles for Moffitt

Saturday, June 16, 7 a.m.

The five-mile, 5K and one-mile event starts near Moffitt's main hospital entrance.

<http://milesformoffitt.com/>



Asthma Summer Camp at Camp Boggy Creek

July 1-7, 2007

Contact the American Lung Association at 1-800-586-4872 for more information.

The Tampa Bay Asthma Coalition c/o Environmental Protection Commission of Hillsborough County

3629 Queen Palm Drive, Tampa Fl 33619

813.627-2600 ext. 1289 or 1008, e-mail at tbac@epchc.org