

Quick Tips to Help Students with Asthma

1. Keep a signed, updated Student Asthma Action Card (SAAC) or your school's asthma action plan for each student with asthma with you at all times.
2. Have all students warm up and cool down – this is especially important for students with asthma, but please do not single them out! In cold weather, students should warm up longer and wear a mask/scarf to warm the air they breathe.
3. Remind students to make sure inhalers are ready-to-go (not empty) and to pre-treat. Instead of questioning students in front of peers, some PE instructors and coaches have established “code words.” For example, one intuitive teacher simply asked, “Hedgehog?” and with a quick thumbs-up the teacher knew the student had his inhaler and remembered to pre-treat.
4. Encourage students to label their inhalers, keep them accessible at all times, and use as prescribed. Discourage them from sharing their inhalers with other students or using them excessively.
5. Be aware of the environment and be flexible. If the field has just been mowed/sprayed or pollen and/or pollution levels are high, reconsider an outdoor activity and move inside, if possible. To check pollen counts in your area, visit www.aafa.org, enter your zip code and click “pollen”. To check air quality, visit www.airnow.gov.
6. If a student is recovering from a respiratory illness or asthma episode and cannot participate, please offer a substitute “team” position like scorekeeper or clipboard holder. Kids with asthma need to feel that they are still part of the group. Even though they may not be able to find the words to thank you, they will still feel grateful.
7. Students with asthma need to be well-hydrated, so keep plenty of water easily accessible and encourage them to drink fluids before, during and after exercising.