

September 2014

Arizona Asthma Coalition Annual Conference

Saturday, September 20, 2014

The Arizona Asthma Coalition will hold its 8th annual conference on Saturday, September 20, 2014, from 8 a.m to 4 p.m. at the University of Phoenix, Tempe Campus. The theme of the conference is "Asthma and Allergy: Wheezing and Sneezing in the Desert." The conference will explore the relationship of allergy and asthma.

Asthma Management and Schools

The local paper recently said that 18,287 kids in the Chicago Public Schools have asthma (I suspect this to be an under-estimation) but only one quarter of them have asthma action plans filed with the schools. Only about half the 4,250 children with a food allergy have plans filed with the schools. This problem is typical of other larger cities as well, and it puts these children at risk. An asthma action plan is an individualized tool that assists a caregiver in evaluating, monitoring and providing care to a child who has asthma. It is advisable for all children who have asthma to have a personalized plan and/or emergency care plan available in the school at all times.

Asthma is a leading cause of school absenteeism due to a chronic condition, accounting for nearly 13 million missed school days per year. Asthma symptoms that are not severe enough to require a visit to an emergency room or to a physician can still be serious enough to prevent a child with asthma from living a fully active life. Schools need to support and implement asthma action plans, student access to inhalers and other asthma medications, and emergency procedures for school staff to use when a student has an asthma attack. Schools, parents, and asthma educators all have the responsibility to make this happen - we are all in this together.

<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/early/2014/09/02/peds.2014-0402.abstract>

**Featured Certified Asthma Educator:
Susanna Rozema, LMSW, AE-C
Asthma Network of West Michigan**

Susanna Rozema's commitment to making a positive difference in her community has deep roots. She was born in the Philippines to missionary parents. Her parent's dedication to their calling set an example and high standard that Susanna has followed throughout her career. After spending her teenage years in the Philippines and Australia, Susanna moved to the Grand Rapids area to attend college. Susanna's mother's family is from that part of the State. Susanna attended Cornerstone University in Grand Rapids and went on to earn a Masters Degree in Social Work from Western Michigan University. Susanna is now a licensed masters-prepared social worker.

Susanna currently completes home-based social work assessments for patients and families with asthma, as well as implements interventions and makes referrals to varied social service programs. Importantly, she strives to coordinate mental health

services for mentally ill parents, caregivers or patients with asthma. Susanna provides preliminary solution focused therapy during home visits. This past spring she became **acertified asthma educator (one of 14 social workers in the nation to become an AE-C)**, therefore adding the role of asthma case manager. She teaches patients and their families about asthma and helps with the development and use of written asthma action plans.

When appropriate, Susanna visits schools to make sure those who administer rescue inhalers are comfortable with that responsibility. Susanna's work is reimbursed through contracts between the Asthma Network of West Michigan and several Medicaid plans in the State of Michigan. "The certification test was a challenge but well worth all the study needed to meet that challenge," said Susanna. "Learning is a life-long pursuit, there is always something new to master in our jobs and in our life." Susanna is a world traveler, a beginner-level ballroom dancer, a kayaker, and an amateur photographer. Makes one wonder when she finds the time.

Virus May Present a Special Challenge for Kids with Asthma

The American Society for Microbiology recently reported that a contaminated single doorknob or table top can spread viruses throughout a building, hotel, health-care facility, or school within 2 to 4 hours. Surfaces capable of carrying infectious organisms include light switches, bed rails, table tops, countertops, push buttons,

coffee pot handles, sink tap handles, door knobs, phones and computer equipment. Keeping kids safe and healthy is an increasing challenge for schools and day-care facilities.

If everyday worries aren't enough, now a relatively rare virus, Enterovirus D68 (EV-D68), is sickening hundreds of children throughout the Midwest. D68 is similar to an influenza outbreak which may not pose a serious health threat for the average person. However, in children with a pre-existing condition such as asthma, D68 can lead to respiratory illness. Severe symptoms can include difficulty breathing, fever and rash. The CDC website lists six states in which cases of D68 have been confirmed in the past month. These states are - Colorado, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, and Missouri - 82 people have had respiratory illness caused by D68. CDC reports that recent cases have been in children ages 6 months to 16 years, with most cases in children aged 4 and 5 years.

EV-D68 can cause mild to severe respiratory illness. Symptoms include:

- Mild symptoms may include fever, runny nose, sneezing, cough, and body and muscle aches.
- Most of the children who got very ill with EV-D68 infection in Missouri and Illinois had difficulty breathing, and some had wheezing. Many of these children had asthma or a history of wheezing.

There is no specific treatment for people with respiratory illness caused by EV-

D68. For mild respiratory illness, you can help relieve symptoms by taking over-the-counter medications for pain and fever. Aspirin should not be given to children. Some people with severe respiratory illness may need to be hospitalized. There are no antiviral medications currently available for people who become infected with EV-D68.

You can help protect yourself from respiratory illnesses by following these steps:

- Wash hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds, especially after changing diapers.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid kissing, hugging, and sharing cups or eating utensils with people who are sick.
- Disinfect frequently touched surfaces, such as toys and doorknobs, especially if someone is sick.

Since people with asthma are at higher risk for respiratory illnesses, they should regularly take asthma medicines and maintain control of their illness during this time. They should also take advantage of influenza vaccine since people with asthma have a difficult time with respiratory illnesses.

<http://www.cdc.gov/non-polio-enterovirus/about/EV-D68.html>

Flour is the Main Cause of Occupational Asthma in France

A recent report from the European Lung Foundation has identified flour as the main cause of occupational asthma in France. Flour is the main cause in a little more than 20% of cases. Women were more likely to be diagnosed with occupational asthma than men. I always thought that the only hazard associated with my baguette habit was obesity. From now on, every time I rip off a hunch of that bready goodness, as least part of my thoughts will turn to those thousands of bakery workers.

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