



# Asthma Awareness Month

## Event Planning Kit



WORLD ASTHMA DAY

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Dear Asthma Awareness Month Partner:

Asthma has reached epidemic proportions in the United States, affecting approximately 20 million people of all ages and races, particularly children. Despite the fact that asthma is widespread, public awareness of common asthma triggers and ways to manage asthma remains limited. Asthma Awareness Month provides a great opportunity for us all to work together to increase public awareness of asthma.

In 1999, the Global Initiative for Asthma, a joint project of the World Health Organization and the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute at the National Institutes of Health, established World Asthma Day and Asthma Awareness Month. Organizations working to improve asthma awareness and care around the world coordinate their activities throughout Asthma Awareness Month to increase public awareness of the asthma epidemic. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) plays a special role in Asthma Awareness Month activities and World Asthma Day events because of our commitment to promoting awareness of indoor and outdoor pollutants that trigger asthma episodes.

To encourage organizations in the U.S. to coordinate local events during Asthma Awareness Month, the EPA developed this Event Planning Kit. In the Kit, you will find many ideas for planning asthma events in schools, hospitals, libraries, state capitol buildings, or other community settings. You will also find a sample proclamation and press release, local and regional contact lists, and a form for ordering educational and promotional materials to use at your events. The Kit is also available on EPA's Web site at [www.epa.gov/asthma/awm.html](http://www.epa.gov/asthma/awm.html)

Hopefully, thousands of asthma awareness events will take place across the United States this May. To help publicize those events, please take a few minutes to fill out and return the enclosed form so that EPA can advertise your event on our Web site. In addition, we value your feedback on the usefulness of the enclosed materials and welcome any suggestions for future materials. Please let us know what you think we can do to promote asthma awareness in the United States.

On behalf of EPA, I would like to thank you for sponsoring an asthma education activity in your local community in support of World Asthma Day and Asthma Awareness Month. We look forward to assisting you with planning your asthma education events. Working together, we can help families take control of asthma.

Sincerely,

Tracey Mitchell, RRT  
Asthma Awareness Month Coordinator  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency



Asthma Awareness Month



Ideas for

# Asthma Awareness Activities

## May is Asthma Awareness Month!

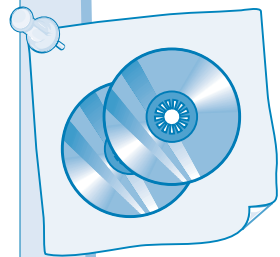
There is no better time to promote asthma education, including management of environmental triggers. Join EPA to plan an educational event for your community. Things to do include:

- ▶ Hold an asthma awareness event that is open to the public with elected officials and local celebrities. Ask your governor or mayor to issue an Asthma Awareness Month proclamation. Have an EPA or health official make a brief presentation on the asthma epidemic and your organization's efforts to combat the disease. Issue a press release announcing the event (see template on page 11).
- ▶ Sponsor an asthma awareness event at a local school, library, hospital, health clinic, or state capitol. Partner with other local organizations involved in asthma education in order to pool resources and increase attention and publicity for the event.
- ▶ Find out if any local leaders or celebrities have asthma and ask them to participate in your event.
- ▶ Because asthma disproportionately affects African-American children, contact local Black churches in your area to find out how you can participate in their Mother's Day programs.
- ▶ Arrange to display and distribute asthma educational materials at local sporting events (e.g., baseball, soccer).
- ▶ Sponsor an asthma awareness event with your local PBS station featuring the "Buster's Breathless" episode of ARTHUR®. To visit ARTHUR®'s Web site, go to <http://pbskids.org/arthur>.
- ▶ Ask local television and radio stations to include EPA's asthma and secondhand smoke public service announcements in their programming.
- ▶ Schedule local TV and radio interviews to talk about asthma and your organization's programs to educate the public on the role environmental asthma triggers play in the development of asthma.
- ▶ Contact area health insurers and managed care organizations to promote asthma education. See page 9 for a list of possible activities.
- ▶ Contact the National Association of School Nurses (NASN) or the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America (AAFA) to arrange professional educational seminars, such as AAFA's "Asthma Management and Education Program," for health professionals.



## Ideas for Asthma Awareness Activities *(continued)*

- ▶ Introduce local schools to the *Indoor Air Quality Tools for Schools* Kit to protect all children from asthma triggers.
- ▶ Contact state or local education associations for support in sponsoring asthma awareness activities in your local schools.
- ▶ Sponsor an asthma walkathon. Invite local partners, hospitals, and pharmaceutical companies to provide asthma educational displays and materials.
- ▶ Contact area university medical schools and/or allied health programs such as nursing, respiratory therapy, or pharmacy to get their students involved in your event.
- ▶ Hold an asthma health fair offering education on environmental asthma triggers and management. Ask local partners, hospitals, and pharmaceutical companies to provide educational displays and materials.
- ▶ Ask local hospitals, clinics, doctors' offices, and pharmacies to display and distribute asthma educational materials.
- ▶ Arrange to display and distribute asthma educational brochures at public libraries, community centers, or other popular places.
- ▶ Ask local chapters of health professional organizations (i.e., respiratory therapists, nurses, pulmonologists, and pediatricians) to include articles in their newsletters on the role environmental asthma triggers play in the development and exacerbation of asthma, and encourage them to incorporate environmental control in their patients' asthma management plans.



## Past Asthma Awareness Month Activities



Hundreds of events take place across the country each year during Asthma Awareness Month. On World Asthma Day 2003, to increase public awareness locally, staff from EPA's headquarters in Washington, DC distributed educational materials, including children's games, brochures, and videos to raise public awareness of indoor pollutants that can trigger asthma episodes. We attended a Baltimore Orioles baseball game in Baltimore, Maryland where hundreds of fans received information about managing asthma and the importance of reducing exposure to indoor asthma triggers. While at the game, we showed thousands of fans at the stadium EPA's Goldfish Public Service Announcement, which includes one child's poignant description of what an asthma attack feels like: "I feel like a fish with no water." You can easily organize similar events in your community. Visit [www.epa.gov/asthma](http://www.epa.gov/asthma) to see a list of free materials, like the PSAs, children's games, and videos described above, that EPA will provide for your event at no cost.



# How to Plan an Asthma Education Event in Your School

## May is Asthma Awareness Month!

There is no better time to promote asthma education, including management of environmental triggers. Join EPA to plan an educational event for staff, parents, and students at a local school. To do this, you will need the support of the school or district administration, school nurse, and other key staff. Things to do include:

### ▼ Plan asthma educational activities at the school:

- ▶ Provide education on environmental asthma triggers and management;
- ▶ Read children's books on asthma to students, such as *Taking Asthma to School*, *Zoo Allergy*, and *The ABC's of Asthma*, by Kim Gosselin;
- ▶ Show the Arthur® video, "Buster's Breathless," or show, "Controlando los Factores del Asma;"
- ▶ Arrange a school-wide assembly with guest speakers, such as kids with asthma, local celebrities, TV personalities, or local doctors or politicians;
- ▶ Organize an asthma poster contest for children;
- ▶ Coordinate with your local American Lung Association (ALA) to launch an *Open Airways for Schools* Program for students age 8-11 with asthma;
- ▶ Coordinate with the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America (AAFA) to launch a *Power Breathing* Program for middle and high school students with asthma;
- ▶ Start a school-based asthma club or provide information on Web-based asthma clubs such as ALA Nebraska's Asthma Buster's Club at [www.asthmabusters.org](http://www.asthmabusters.org); contact AAFA for information on starting an educational support group for school age children;
- ▶ Offer asthma education during in-service days for teachers, custodians, and other school staff;
- ▶ Offer asthma education for parents at local PTA/PTO meetings or other similar events;

- ▶ Ask the National Association of School Nurses (NASN) to offer their course to nurses in your district, *Managing Asthma Triggers*;
- ▶ Sponsor a staff breakfast or lunch and introduce the *Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) Tools for Schools* Program;
- ▶ Design asthma awareness bulletin boards or other displays for students and staff;
- ▶ Encourage teachers to incorporate asthma and the environment into appropriate curricula, e.g., science and health;
- ▶ Post information in teacher and other school staff lounges;
- ▶ Include asthma awareness information in school newsletters and other packets sent home to parents/guardians; and
- ▶ Conduct a walkthrough of your school to determine if asthma triggers exist. If triggers are found, a remediation plan should be developed and implemented as soon as possible. See the *IAQ Tools for Schools* Kit for assistance.

- ▼ **Recruit local sponsors to provide giveaways or support. Potential sponsors include area businesses and organizations—such as the local chapter of the ALA or AAFA—that may assist in asthma events or trainings.**
- ▼ **Publicize your event(s) and Asthma Awareness Month on the school bulletin board or Web site, in the school newsletter, in state and local education association newsletters and Web sites, flyers, PTA announcements, local newspapers, and local media.**

**And remember...**

## How to Plan an Asthma Education Event in Your School *(continued)*

▼ **Asthma educational materials are available for students, teachers, nurses, school officials, parents, and the community. The following are some of the materials that are available to you at no cost:**

- ▶ EPA’s “Clear Your Home of Asthma Triggers” brochure;
- ▶ EPA’s “Take the Smoke-Free Home Pledge” brochure and poster;
- ▶ EPA’s “Dusty the Asthma Goldfish and His Asthma Triggers Funbook”;
- ▶ EPA’s “Help Your Child Gain Control Over Asthma” brochure;
- ▶ ARTHUR® video, “Buster’s Breathless;” and
- ▶ AAFA Student Asthma Action Cards.



## Ten Ways to Manage Asthma in the School Environment

### 1 Use the *IAQ Tools for Schools* Kit

- ▶ Improve the school environment with IAQ practices recommended in this Kit. To order the free Kit, go to [www.epa.gov/iaq/schools](http://www.epa.gov/iaq/schools).

### 2 Control Animal Allergens

- ▶ Remove warm-blooded animals from the classroom and school.

### 3 Control Cockroach Allergens

- ▶ Use integrated pest management practices to prevent cockroach and other pest problems (e.g., store food in tightly sealed containers and place dumpsters away from the building).

### 4 Clean Up Mold and Control Moisture

- ▶ Fix moisture problems and thoroughly dry wet areas within 24-48 hours to prevent mold growth.
- ▶ Clean up hard, moldy surfaces with water and detergent, and then dry thoroughly.

### 5 Eliminate Secondhand Smoke Exposure

- ▶ Enforce no-smoking policies in the school.

### 6 Reduce Dust Mite Exposure

- ▶ Make sure the school is dusted and vacuumed thoroughly and regularly.

### 7 Develop an Asthma Management Plan in Your School

- ▶ Include school policies on inhaler and other medication usage and emergency procedures for school staff to follow for asthma attacks.
- ▶ Make sure students with asthma obtain and turn in copies of their Asthma Action Cards to teachers, the school nurse, etc.

- ▶ Encourage students to identify and manage their asthma triggers.
- ▶ Obtain the National Asthma Education and Prevention Program’s *Managing Asthma: A Guide for Schools* via [www.nhlbi.nih.gov](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov).

### 8 Provide School-Based Asthma Education Programs

- ▶ Contact your local American Lung Association about *Open Airways for Schools*, a school-based asthma management program for students age 8-11 with asthma.
- ▶ Contact the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America (AAFA) about *Asthma Care Training for Kids and Parents*, an education program for kids age 7-12.

### 9 Reduce School Bus Diesel Exhaust

- ▶ Replace the oldest buses in the fleet with new ones.
- ▶ Install effective emission control systems on newer buses.
- ▶ Encourage policies and practices to eliminate unnecessary school bus idling.

### 10 Gather Additional Asthma Information and Resources

- ▶ Establish a complete file on existing asthma and allergy-related information sources to reference throughout the school year.
- ▶ Ask the National Association of School Nurses (NASN) to offer their course to nurses in your district, *Managing Asthma Triggers*.
- ▶ Visit EPA’s asthma Web site at [www.epa.gov/asthma](http://www.epa.gov/asthma).



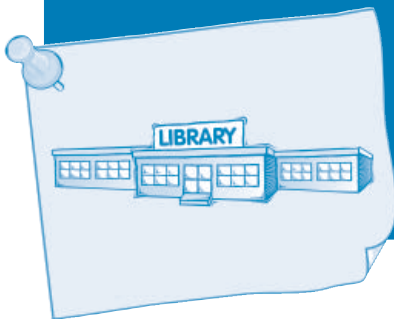
# How to Plan an Asthma Education Event at a Local Hospital or Clinic

## May is Asthma Awareness Month!

There is no better time to promote asthma education, including management of environmental triggers. Join EPA to plan an educational event for staff, patients, and the public at a local hospital or clinic. To do this, you will need the support of hospital or clinic management and key staff. Things to do include:

- ▼ **Conduct asthma educational trainings and coordinate activities at the local hospital or clinic:**
    - ▶ Provide education on environmental asthma triggers and management;
    - ▶ Incorporate asthma into health fairs;
    - ▶ Show the ARTHUR® video, “Buster’s Breathless,” and EPA’s asthma and secondhand smoke public service announcements;
    - ▶ Educate parents on asthma and the risks of secondhand smoke;
    - ▶ Distribute asthma education materials with prescriptions filled at local pharmacies;
    - ▶ Provide guest speakers—such as asthma patients, doctors, nurses, or TV personalities—to describe how to live with asthma; and
    - ▶ Schedule a press conference with local media to discuss current asthma care practices.
  - ▼ **Recruit local sponsors to provide giveaways or support. Potential sponsors include area businesses and organizations—such as the local chapter of the American Lung Association—that may assist in asthma events or trainings.**
  - ▼ **Contact the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America about conducting an “Asthma Management and Education” training for health professionals who educate and care for patients with asthma.**
  - ▼ **Contact the American Association for Respiratory Care (AARC) to obtain the “Environmental Triggers of Asthma” CD-ROM continuing education course for respiratory therapists.**
  - ▼ **Issue press releases and publicize your event in newsletters, patient information packets, on Web sites, and through local media.**
- And remember...**
- ▼ **Distribute asthma materials to patients, hospital or clinic staff, and families. The following are a few of the many asthma education resources available to you:**
    - ▶ EPA’s “Clear Your Home of Asthma Triggers” brochure;
    - ▶ EPA’s “Take the Smoke-Free Home Pledge” brochure and poster;
    - ▶ EPA’s “Help Your Child Gain Control Over Asthma” brochure;
    - ▶ EPA’s “Dusty the Asthma Goldfish and His Asthma Triggers Funbook”; and
    - ▶ ARTHUR® video, “Buster’s Breathless.”





# How to Plan an Asthma Education Event at a Local Library

## May is Asthma Awareness Month!

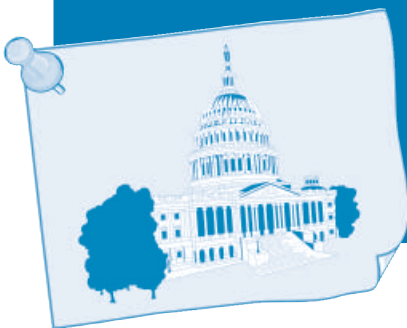
There is no better time to promote asthma education, including management of environmental triggers. Join EPA to plan an educational event for children and the community at a local library. To do this, you will need the support of the library staff, particularly the Director of Children's Programming. Things to do include:

- ▼ **Schedule a children's reading time dedicated to asthma. Consider reading the following books, written by Kim Gosselin:**
  - ▶ *Taking Asthma to School,*
  - ▶ *Zoo Allergy,* and
  - ▶ *The ABC's of Asthma.*
- ▶ EPA's "Help Your Child Gain Control Over Asthma" brochure;
- ▶ EPA's "Dusty the Asthma Goldfish and His Asthma Triggers Funbook"; and
- ▶ ARTHUR® video, "Buster's Breathless."
- ▼ **Publicize your event in library newsletters, flyers, on Web sites, bulletin boards, and through local media.**
- ▼ **Plan a book fair with a health theme. Invite local expert speakers to provide "mini-seminars" on asthma and related topics at the library throughout the day.**

And remember...

- ▼ **Distribute asthma materials to library visitors. Following are some of the materials available to you:**
  - ▶ EPA's "Clear Your Home of Asthma Triggers" brochure;
  - ▶ EPA's "Take the Smoke-Free Home Pledge" brochure and poster;





# How to Plan an Asthma Education Event at your State Capitol

## May is Asthma Awareness Month!

There is no better time to promote asthma education, including management of environmental triggers. Join EPA to plan an educational event in your state's capitol building. To do this, you will need the support of government officials and local communities. Things to do include:

- ▼ **Contact your state legislator who can act as your sponsor for the event. Their office can help you obtain space in the state capitol. You will most likely be asked to coordinate details with the capitol's operations office.**
  - ▼ **Sponsor education activities in the state capitol building. Partner with other local organizations involved in asthma education in order to pool resources and increase attention and publicity for the event.**
  - ▼ **Issue an asthma proclamation (see sample on page 10).**
  - ▼ **Plan a health fair providing free asthma screenings and education on environmental asthma triggers and management. Recruit local sponsors to provide giveaways or funding to support the health fair. Potential sponsors include area doctors, respiratory care departments, businesses, and non-profit organizations—that may assist in setting up asthma screenings and identifying additional sponsors.**
  - ▼ **Hold a press conference to announce the state's partnership as well as encourage the state as a whole to participate.**
  - ▼ **Issue press releases and publicize your event in local newsletters, the state's Web site, and local media.**
  - ▼ **Work with the state's press office to set up interviews with experts in the field, people who have asthma, and government officials. The press office can also set up meetings for state officials and local organizations to visit schools and daycare facilities to promote asthma management.**
  - ▼ **Coordinate with local governments, asthma coalitions, manufacturers, doctors, respiratory therapists, and school districts.**
  - ▼ **Remember to plan your event well in advance to address any security concerns.**
- And remember...**
- ▼ **Distribute asthma materials within state offices and to the general public. Following are some of the materials available to you:**
    - ▶ EPA's "Clear Your Home of Asthma Triggers" brochure;
    - ▶ EPA's "Take the Smoke-Free Home Pledge" brochure and poster;
    - ▶ EPA's "Help Your Child Gain Control Over Asthma" brochure;
    - ▶ EPA's "Dusty the Asthma Goldfish and His Asthma Triggers Funbook"; and
    - ▶ ARTHUR® video, "Buster's Breathless."





# Asthma Education Ideas

## for Health Insurers and Managed Care Organizations

### May is Asthma Awareness Month!

There is no better time to promote asthma education, including management of environmental triggers. Join EPA to plan an educational event for patients and providers in a community setting. Things to do include:

- ▼ Place an article in a newsletter or e-bulletin to educate patients about asthma, indoor environmental triggers, and ways to manage asthma.
  - ▼ Distribute asthma materials to providers (hospitals, specialists, and physicians) to educate them about comprehensive asthma management for patients. In addition, co-sponsor a one-day training for providers with a local chapter of the American Lung Association or Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America.
  - ▼ Contact the American Association for Respiratory Care (AARC) to obtain the “Environmental Triggers of Asthma” CD-ROM continuing education for respiratory therapists in your network.
  - ▼ Host a health fair in a community setting, such as a hospital or area high school. Distribute information about asthma management and methods to identify and mitigate indoor environmental triggers. Recruit local sponsors to provide giveaways or support. Examples of donated materials include items helpful in mitigating indoor environmental triggers, such as pillow or mattress covers or HEPA filters for vacuums.
  - ▼ Encourage hospitals and physicians to run EPA asthma and secondhand smoke public service campaigns in closed circuit television in patient waiting rooms.
  - ▼ Sponsor an asthma awareness event in a local school setting and educate students, teachers and faculty about ways to manage asthma in the school environment. Distribute asthma action plans to school nurses and students.
  - ▼ Honor outstanding providers in your network with an “Asthma Award of the Year” for demonstrating excellent leadership in comprehensively managing patient asthma and increasing asthma awareness with patients.
  - ▼ Conduct an in-home environmental assessment in select homes in locations with a high prevalence of asthma. Display these homes as models to showcase the importance of managing indoor environmental triggers.
  - ▼ Create a link from your plan’s Web site to EPA’s Web site so patients and providers can learn more information about comprehensive asthma management.
- And remember...
- ▼ Asthma educational materials are available for students, teachers, nurses, school officials, parents, and the community. The following are some of the materials that are available to you:
    - ▶ EPA’s “Clear Your Home of Asthma Triggers” brochure; and
    - ▶ EPA’s “Take the Smoke-Free Home Pledge” brochure and poster.



# Sample Proclamation

## From a Local Official

Enlist a well-known local official to issue a proclamation supporting events and activities during May, Asthma Awareness Month. Below is a sample proclamation that can serve as a guide.

YOUR CITY, COUNTY, OR STATE



YOUR GOVERNMENTAL OFFICE

[COUNTY EXECUTIVE'S, MAYOR'S, GOVERNOR'S]  
PROCLAMATION IN SUPPORT OF ASTHMA AWARENESS MONTH  
IN [COUNTY, CITY, OR STATE]

WHEREAS, asthma has reached epidemic proportions in the United States, affecting about 20 million people;

WHEREAS, asthma is the leading cause of childhood hospitalizations, long-term illness, and school absenteeism, accounting for more than 14 million missed school days each year;

WHEREAS, each year 2 million people are rushed to the emergency room and over 4,000 people die from asthma;

WHEREAS, asthma is a long-term, inflammatory disease in which the airways of the lungs constrict, causing wheezing, breathlessness, chest tightness, and coughing;

WHEREAS, exposure to allergens and irritants such as dust mites, mold, cockroaches, pet dander, and secondhand smoke can bring on an asthma episode;

WHEREAS, secondhand smoke worsens children's asthma in up to one million children;

WHEREAS, there are simple steps people can take to reduce their exposure to environmental asthma triggers;

WHEREAS, **[your organization]** and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency are encouraging Americans to identify and reduce their exposures to environmental triggers in homes and schools, and incorporate environmental controls into their asthma management plans.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, **[name]**, **[title]** of **[county, city, or state]** do hereby proclaim:

May **[Year]**  
Asthma Awareness Month  
In **[County, City, or State]**

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of Official)





# Press Release

## Template

This template can be customized to highlight your asthma awareness event. Learn specific information about the number of children with asthma in your state from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Web site at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov). I nclude this information in your press release.

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Contact:** [Name]  
[Phone Number]  
[Email Address]

### [YOUR COMMUNITY] CELEBRATES ASTHMA AWARENESS MONTH

[PLACE- Release DATE] - In the United States alone, 6.2 million children suffer from asthma, which accounts for one third of all pediatric emergency room visits. In addition, asthma is the fourth most common reason for pediatric physician office visits, and is one of the leading causes of school absenteeism [Insert your state specific asthma statistics].

In response to these alarming statistics, and in an effort to raise public awareness of the risks faced everyday by 20 million Americans living with asthma, [YOUR ORGANIZATION] is joining the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to participate in Asthma Awareness Month and World Asthma Day. [YOUR ORGANIZATION] is holding a [NAME OF EVENT] on [DATE] at [LOCATION] in [CITY].

All across the world, events are being held in May as part of Asthma Awareness Month. Join [YOUR ORGANIZATION] and EPA at events nationwide during May. Each event will raise awareness about indoor and outdoor pollutants that trigger asthma and ways to prevent children's asthma episodes.

For more information on EPA's Asthma Program and Asthma Awareness Month, log on to [www.epa.gov/asthma](http://www.epa.gov/asthma) and [YOUR ORGANIZATION'S WEB SITE].









