

Asthma

What's Asthma and Why is It Such a Problem???

Make copies to give to more kids!

Asthma is the narrowing of the airways in your lungs. When that happens it is difficult to breathe. Certain things in the air we breathe or the food we eat may cause severe breathing difficulties or an asthma attack. These are called triggers. Sometimes these attacks can be triggered by pollution or exercise. Some kids are born with asthma and some kids begin to have (acquire) asthma or breathing difficulties while growing up. Asthma can usually be controlled with medicine or proper behavior, but way too many kids are very, very sick from this disease. ✓ Since 1976, childhood asthma cases have increased by 200%. That means millions of kids miss school and don't have much fun!

Facts about Kids and Asthma

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- More than 4.8 million children under 18 years of age have asthma. Thousands more are suffering from asthma but they haven't been able to see a doctor yet.
- More kids miss school because of asthma than any other chronic (continual) illness.
- Over 150,000 children are hospitalized from asthma each year.
- The cost of treating asthma is over \$6 billion a year.
- More kids in poor inner-city areas have asthma than in other areas.

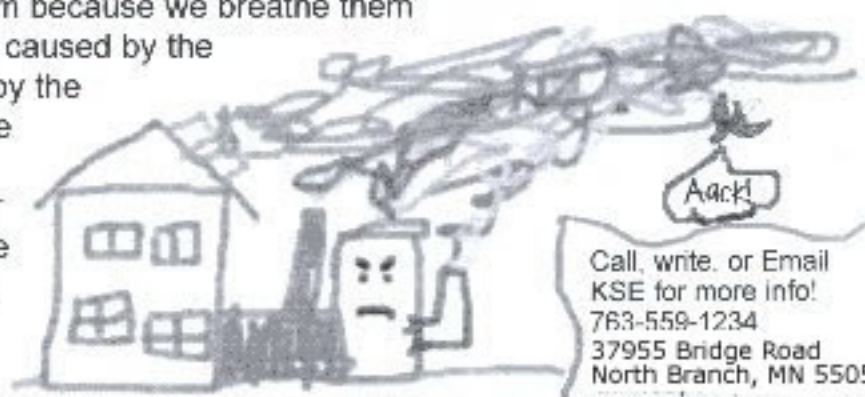
That's a lot of money!!

Is our environment to blame??

We don't know exactly how much a polluted environment can make us sick, but we are learning more every day. We do know that some illnesses have been linked to pollution, especially asthma and other respiratory (breathing) problems like bronchitis and pneumonia.

What Causes Asthma?

Outdoor Air Pollutants are contributing to the increases in the number of kids with asthma. Scientists have found that there are many pollutants in the air that we breathe. Although most of these have difficult names like **carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide, ozone, and particulate matter**, we should learn and remember them because we breathe them every day. Much of this pollution is caused by the cars we drive. Lots of it is caused by the factories that make products that we buy. When we heat or cool our homes, we are also creating outdoor air pollution that may make us sick.



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