

A publication of the Student Health Advisory Council and the Student Health Service

UD STUDENT HEALTH SERVICE
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BREATHE Easy

Asthma is a condition with narrowing of the airways. There are several reasons that airways become narrowed including from inflammation or in response to irritation. Narrowing of the airways can cause shortness of breath, tightness in the chest, and noisy breathing called "wheezing." Some people only have minor symptoms such as a cough during exercise or when it is cold outside.

Asthma is treated with medications that decrease the inflammation and tightness of the airways. Some people need to be on medications every day and some people only need medications when they exercise or go outside in the cold weather.

Asthma can be worsened by triggers in the college environment. It might be helpful and healthful to consider the following suggestions:

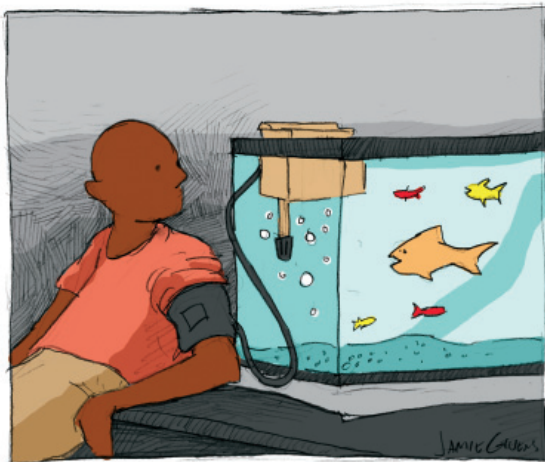
1. Reassess what exposures may be triggering your breathing problem. Keep in mind that secondhand smoke may be a new or heightened trigger for you. Other triggers may include dust, pollen, mold, perfumes, exercise, or cold weather. Once you know your triggers, you should avoid them to decrease exacerbations of your asthma.
2. Remember to use your peak flow meter regularly and notify your doctor if your peak flow is decreasing. A decreasing peak flow may mean that you are about to have an asthma exacerbation.
3. Understand what your asthma medications are, how to use them, and what medications to take if you suddenly develop breathing difficulty.

People with asthma must have an action plan to follow in case sudden breathing problems develop. The goal, however, is to recognize signs and symptoms early to avoid serious breathing problems. If you have questions about controlling your symptoms, developing an action plan, or how to use your medications properly, please contact student health for a consultation.

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STRESSED?

You're probably not alone. When your body or mind is called upon to adapt, you experience stress. In your life, you will encounter positive (a new roommate/friend) and negative (a failed exam) challenges, which require adaptation. Humans respond by taking a fight or flight approach to the changes — an increase in heart rate, muscle tension, high blood pressure and an increase in perspiration, glucose, cholesterol and stomach acid.



JOHN FOUND A WAY TO RELIEVE STRESS AND PUT HIS HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE TO GOOD USE.

This is a very old response pattern that worked well to prepare for the attack of a lion, but is not very helpful when roommate conflicts occur, our self-esteem is being attacked, or we lose a loved one. This fight or flight response is often not only inappropriate but can actually damage the body. Ulcers, headaches, high blood pressure, digestive problems, memory loss, heart disease, and cancer have all been linked to prolonged stress.

GOOD NEWS – YOU CAN LOWER YOUR STRESS LEVEL!

Step one – Identify your particular stressors. Relationships, workloads, recent losses, major life changes, a zillion commitments, poor eating habits, unrealistic expectations from life.

Step two – Ask yourself, how can you eliminate some of the stressors?

Learn new skills such as assertiveness or time management • Organize your work load • Increase support and insight through counseling • Combine activities (do laundry with a friend) • Cut out unnecessary commitments • Get enough sleep • Eat a healthy diet (cut out caffeine) • Exercise regularly.

Step three – Relax.

Skills such as deep breathing, deep muscle relaxation and imagery work can be learned and, with practice, can trigger feelings of relaxation and well being. Massage, yoga, prayer and meditation can also help the body cope with stress. These activities are best started before you feel overwhelmed and will require regular use for maximum benefit.

Step four – Tap into campus resources.

The Center for Counseling and Student Development, located above the bookstore in Perkins Student Center, offers an initial assessment meeting if students want help identifying sources of their stress and individual and group counseling to address students' concerns. Wellspring, a wellness program located in Laurel Hall, has peer educators able to do workshops on stress management, introduction to relaxing massage, or individual meetings to explore stress management strategies.

Will you experience stress in college? Sure. Can you learn to manage it better? Absolutely!

Overdone in the sun

Although viewed as healthy, there is no such thing as a “healthy tan.” Some people tend to burn while others tan. Factors, which increase the chance of sunburn, include: a light complexion, light colored hair, the time of day, amount of exposure and even altitude. Some medications such as oral contraceptives, antibiotics, tranquilizers, and topical products may cause a photosensitivity reaction.

Protective measures should be used. Apply sunscreen to exposed skin 30 minutes before exposure; reapply after swimming. Don’t forget the nose, face, ears and shoulders. Use a sunscreen with a SPF (sun protective factor) of at least 15 or more. Some dermatologists recommend a minimum of 30. Use a sunscreen that is PABA free (para aminobenzoic acid) since this ingredient can irritate the skin. Try avoiding the time when the sunrays are the strongest— 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. If you are in intense sun, use a total block such as zinc oxide. Sunscreens absorb certain UV rays, but sunblocks prevent the rays from penetrating the skin. Wear a hat and sunglasses in addition to your UV protection.

Although the sun feels good and the skin doesn’t look red, hours later you may be surprised. The slightly pink skin may become bright red, painful and blistered within 24 hours. What to do if this happens? Cool compresses, baths several times a day, and the use of a pain reliever such as acetaminophen (Tylenol®) or ibuprofen (Advil®) may help. Avoid harsh or scented soaps;

avoid petroleum jelly; and benzocaine products which can cause allergic reactions and, finally, don’t pop any blisters. Consult a health care provider if you develop a headache, rash, nausea, vomiting or a fever.

What may happen to your skin after years of unprotected exposure? The skin develops brown areas known as “liver spots” as well as thickens, sags, and wrinkles. The eyes may develop cataracts. With long-term exposure to the sun, the risk of cancer increases. The three main types of skin cancer are basal cell, squamous cell, and melanoma. Basal cell usually occurs in those with light hair and complexion; those who easily burn and don’t tan. It appears as shiny, fleshy, slow-growing nodules. Squamous cell usually appears on the face, ears, lips, and mouth of fair-skinned people as red, scaly, patches. If detected early, both types have a high cure rate. Melanoma, the most dangerous form, usually appears as a dark brown or black mole with an irregular border. Lesions may become red, blue, or white. The most common sites for melanomas are the upper back in men and upper back, chest, and lower legs in women. Examine skin regularly — early detection is critical. Keep an eye out for unusual growths, itchy patches, sores that won’t heal, changes in moles or colored areas. Consult a clinician to examine suspicious lesions.

Tanning at a salon is not a healthy way to

achieve a golden glow. Rays from tanning beds can penetrate deeper into the skin. As for “suntan accelerants,” the FDA warns against their use. Artificial tanning agents, which stain your skin, are generally safe.

Remember the sun’s rays are everywhere so take precautions year-round whether skiing, hiking, sunbathing, in the car, or out for a walk.



“ISN'T IT IRONIC THAT WE USE A KITCHEN TIMER?”

Exercise You know it's good for you!

Although most of us know that exercise can benefit our physical and mental health, incorporating it into our lives is sometimes an effort. What is holding you back? Feeling tired? Find exercise boring? First, realize that you probably already have some physical

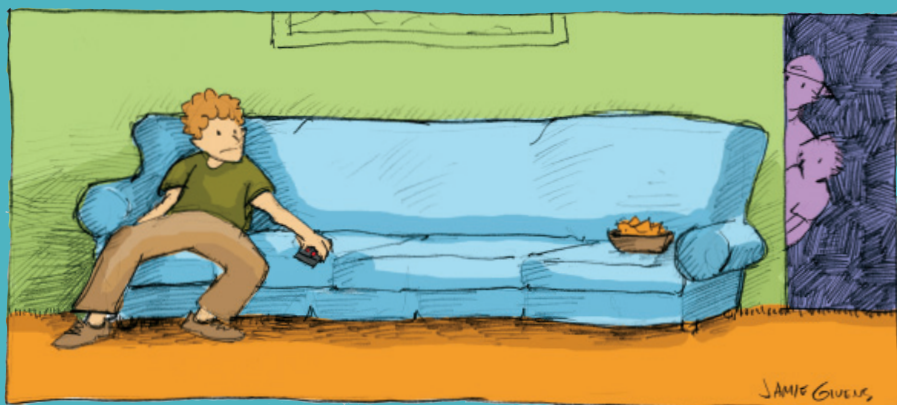
activity in your day. See if you can gradually increase the time and pace of your activities. Add to existing activities and vary what exercise you are involved in so you don’t get bored. Walk with a friend or perhaps a dog, throw a Frisbee, ride a bike, swim in the pool, or find music that has a good beat and dance to it. If you choose activities you enjoy and fit your personality and lifestyle, you will be more apt to find time for exercise.

OTHER HELPFUL TIPS:

- Exercise regularly, it then becomes a habit.
- Don’t give up if you have to miss a few days.

- Remember comfort and safety. Choose appropriate clothing, locations, and weather conditions. (For example, break in new sneakers slowly to prevent blisters; wear a helmet if biking)
 - Encourage friends to join and/or support you.
 - Drink plenty of water.
 - Know when you have had enough — your body’s warning signals. (For example, joint pain or abnormal heart palpitations)
 - Challenge yourself and celebrate your successes
- If you build up to as little as 30 minutes of moderate physical activity each day, you can seriously improve your health, your looks and your attitude. Physical activity lowers your risk of heart disease, cancer, diabetes, hypertension, osteoporosis, and back pain. It also improves strength and endurance, helps maintain healthy bones and muscles, helps control your weight, and improves your mind and mood.

Go for it! You can do it!



FRANK'S ROOMMATES TRIED EVERYTHING TO GET HIM TO EXERCISE.