

Asthma education

1. **Concept of asthma as an inflammatory disease**
2. **Concept of airway narrowing** being due to a combination of:
 - Smooth muscle spasm
 - Airway inflammation characterised by:
 - oedema (swelling of the airway lining)
 - mucus hypersecretion (excess mucus in the airways)
 - epithelial damage (damage to the inner linings of the lungs)Illustrations are useful to explain these concepts.
3. **Concept of two classes of asthma medication**
 - Bronchodilators (Reliever Medication)
 - Anti-inflammatory agents (Preventer Medication)
4. **Explanation of medications and delivery devices**
 - Type
 - Action
 - Role in treatment
 - The need for preventive therapy to be used every day whether the patient feels well or not
 - Common side-effects and how to cope with these
 - Alternative delivery devices

Reinforce the need for long-term compliance with preventive therapy. Emphasise that treatment cannot be discontinued as soon as the symptoms resolve.

5. **Importance of an Asthma Action Plan**
 - Recognising deteriorating asthma
 - Reacting to increasing asthma symptoms or a fall in peak flow by increasing medication according to the Plan.
6. **Need for peak flow monitoring**
 - Instruct in correct technique
 - Explain the interaction between peak flow and the Action Plan
7. **Recognition of asthma triggers and how to avoid them**
8. **Prevention of exercise-induced asthma**
9. **Correct use of inhalers**
 - Demonstrate, and check the patient's technique
10. **Education about negative behaviour such as smoking and non-compliance with treatment recommendations**
 - Childhood asthma is common: 30% of children will have asthma to some degree at some stage in childhood.
 - Many children with infrequent virus-induced wheezing in infancy improve by the age of 5.
 - Allergy is an important cause of asthma in children and can trigger acute attacks of asthma. Continuing asthma is more likely if eczema and hay fever are also present.
 - More than half the children with mild asthma will be free of symptoms or have only mild intermittent wheezing in later life.
 - Moderate or severe asthma rarely goes away by itself, even in adolescents. Stopping treatment results in a return of symptoms, usually within days to weeks.
12. **School-based management**
 - Parents should give the school the student's Asthma Action Plan, especially when the student is going on a school camp