RAD (Reactive Airway Disease) and Asthma

What it is:
The lungs are extra sensitive in RAD (reactive airway disease) and asthma. They react to things like cats, exercise or colds. Some people have sensitive skin, where soap makes the skin red, swollen and itchy. Other people have sensitive lungs.

Usually in RAD or asthma, there are long periods of time when there are no symptoms, and times when there are attacks, flare-ups or flares. Sometimes the asthma symptoms come almost daily.

Signs and symptoms of an episode of RAD or asthma:
• dry cough
• hard to breathe
• tight feeling in chest
• wheeze
• hurts to breathe
• feel scared

What is happening in an episode of RAD or asthma?
Three changes happen in the lungs during an asthma episode:

1. The inside lining of the airway or breathing tube becomes swollen and inflamed. When the airway swells up, the opening for air gets smaller. This means less air can get in and out of the lungs.
2. The muscles around the airway tighten or spasm. This is called bronchoconstriction. When the airways tighten, they get smaller, and less air can pass through.

3. The lungs make extra mucus. This can plug the small airways and make it harder to move air in and out of the lungs.

**The goals of RAD and asthma control are:**
- No symptoms or minor symptoms.
- Sleeping through the night without symptoms.
- No time off from school due to symptoms.
- Being able to be active and play sports.
- No emergency room visits or overnight stays in the hospital.
- Few or no side effects from the medicine for RAD or asthma.

**Treatments:**

- Prevent RAD and asthma episodes by knowing what your **triggers** are and keep away from them, if you can.

- Follow your **Asthma Action Plan**.

- A **peak flow meter** can measure how much air you can blow out. The number you get on the meter can tell you if a RAD or asthma flare might start soon.

- **Medicine** is used every day to prevent RAD or asthma symptoms, to control the swelling and spasms in the airway and to loosen the mucus.

**RAD and asthma can be controlled.**

- You and the health care team work together to meet the goals of asthma control. Keep your appointments. Make sure you understand your Asthma Action Plan. Make sure you understand what medicines you need every day and what medicines to take for asthma symptoms.
• If you are not meeting your asthma goals, talk to your doctor or nurse. They may be able to make changes in your Asthma Action Plan that will help you meet your goals.

Now that you’ve read this:

☐ Describe RAD or asthma to your nurse, doctor, or respiratory therapist. (Check when done.)

☐ Tell your nurse, doctor, or respiratory therapist what you can do to control RAD and asthma. (Check when done.)

If you have any questions or concerns,

☐ call your child’s doctor or ☐ call ______________________

If you want to know more about child health and illness, visit our library at The Emily Center at Phoenix Children’s Hospital
1919 East Thomas Road
Phoenix, AZ 85016
602-933-1400
866-933-6459
www.phoenixchildrens.org
Facebook: facebook.com/theemilycenter
Twitter: @emilycenter
Pinterest: pinterest.com/emilycenter

Disclaimer
The information provided at this site is intended to be general information, and is provided for educational purposes only. It is not intended to take the place of examination, treatment, or consultation with a physician. Phoenix Children’s Hospital urges you to contact your physician with any questions you may have about a medical condition.
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Name of Health Care Provider: _______________________________
Date returned: ____________ ☐ db

Family Review of Handout

Health care providers: Please teach families with this handout.
Families: Please let us know what you think of this handout.

Would you say this handout is hard to read? ☐ Yes ☐ No

easy to read? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Please circle the parts of the handout that were hard to understand.

Would you say this handout is interesting to read? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Why or why not?

Would you do anything differently after reading this handout? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, what?

After reading this handout, do you have any questions about the subject? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, what?
Is there anything you don’t like about the drawings?  □ Yes  □ No

If yes, what?

What changes would you make in this handout to make it better or easier to understand?

Please return your review of this handout to your nurse or doctor or send it to the address below.

The Emily Center
Health Education Specialist
Phoenix Children’s Hospital
1919 East Thomas Road
Phoenix, AZ 85016-7710

602-933-1395

Thank you for helping us!