

# Pointers For Parents

## Fighting Back Childhood Asthma

(NAPSA)—New research from the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America (AAFA) shows that minority children are most vulnerable to asthma.

Asthma, a disease that can be devastating without proper management, affects more than one in 20 children in the United States.

The research from AAFA shows that factors like poverty, air quality in cities, indoor allergens, lack of patient education and inadequate medical care contribute to a higher rate of medical emergencies and death for minority children with asthma.

But the researchers say parents can help protect their children from the disease by fighting back. AAFA advises parents to know what they're up against and take charge:

- **Get care**—Get checkups and ongoing medical care for your child if he or she has asthma. Call your local social services agency to see what assistance may be available if you don't have insurance or if your insurance doesn't provide enough coverage.

- **Reduce risks**—Environmental factors like cigarette smoke, outdoor air pollution, pollen, cockroaches, dust and mold, can make your child vulnerable to asthma attacks. Discuss ways to eliminate these triggers with your doctor.

- **Stick to the game plan**—Controlling asthma largely depends on regular and proper use of prescribed medications. Make sure that any medication is used correctly to reduce the chance of having an emergency.

- **Don't be fooled**—Recognize that asthma is an ongoing condition. Some parents mistakenly



believe that the child does not need medication if symptoms are absent.

- **Confront your fears**—Think about your own attitudes towards treatment and the role of medicines in keeping your child healthy. Some parents may feel that long-term medicine use can be harmful, addictive or unnecessary. Other parents fear the potential for side-effects or the limits medication may place on your child's ability to play or exercise. Open and honest discussions with your child's doctor can help address your concerns.

- **Find a health partner**—Finding a doctor you trust and with whom you can comfortably discuss your child's treatment can mean that you will have a valuable partner in your efforts to make sure your child stays healthy.

For more information on how to fight asthma and keep your child healthy, call 1.800.7.ASTHMA (1.800.727.8462) or visit [www.aafa.org](http://www.aafa.org). You can download the report "Ethnic Disparities in the Burden and Treatment of Asthma," in the "What's New" section at [www.aafa.org](http://www.aafa.org).

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*Note To Editors: While this article is useful at any time, particularly good times to run it may be April, which is National Minority Health Month and May, which is National Asthma and Allergy Awareness Month.*