

Women's Health **UPDATE**

How To Proactively Manage Your Asthma

(NAPSA)—Many women with asthma become overwhelmed by it and let it control the way they live their lives. Dr. Monica Kraft, Director of Duke University's Allergy, Asthma and Airway Center, who is featured in a television special entitled "Breathing Easy: Women & Asthma," talks about effective ways in which women with asthma can accomplish goals and live the life they want.



Dr. Monica Kraft

"One of my patients decided that she wanted to start running at the age of 48, but after a quarter mile she was wheezing and coughing," says Dr. Kraft. "Together, we worked on ways to enable her to run. She now has a goal of completing a 10k running race."

In the show, Dr. Kraft advises that if you have asthma, it's important to put yourself first and not let asthma control your life. You have to find the right doctor with whom you can build a long-term relationship because on-going follow-up is the key to managing your asthma. Then you have to describe your symptoms and how often you are using your fast-acting inhaler. Tell your doctor how these symptoms keep you from doing what you want or need to do.

Your doctor can help you set goals—whether it's running or gardening without getting out of breath—and let you know that such goals do not have to be out of reach. You must learn to recognize your symptoms and their triggers.

There are many ways that you can help control your asthma. The most important step is talking to your doctor about ways to manage asthma. If you believe your asthma is starting to control

To Proactively Manage Your Asthma:

- Be Engaged in the management of your condition.
- Be in Touch with Yourself by being aware of your environment and how you respond to it.
- Set Important Goals so your asthma won't control you.

Source: Dr. Monica Kraft



your life, Dr. Kraft offers the following tips on how to help your doctor best serve you:

- Find out what you can about asthma so you can identify the symptoms and how it might be affecting your life. There are many great informational tools out there, including Web sites like www.asthmaawarenessedu.com and the television show "Breathing Easy: Women & Asthma," that can help women identify goals and find ways to talk to their doctors about asthma management.

- Think about your rescue inhaler use—do you use it more than twice a week? Do you use it at particular times?

- Try to identify the specific environments or situations that trigger symptoms such as shortness of breath, chest tightening, lung burning, wheezing and coughing.

- Identify what you feel if and/or when you wake up at night.

- Identify what you feel when you first wake up in the morning.

- What medications have you taken in the past that are or aren't related to asthma?

- What medications are you currently taking?

With the right tools and medications and the knowledge of how and when to use those tools, you can control your asthma.