



May is Asthma Awareness Month



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Event Planning Kit



Dear Asthma Awareness Month Partner:

Asthma affects about 23 million people of all ages and races. Despite the fact that asthma is widespread, public awareness of common asthma triggers and ways to manage asthma remains limited. Asthma Awareness Month in May provides a great opportunity to work together to increase public awareness of asthma.

The Global Initiative for Asthma, a joint project of the World Health Organization and the National Institutes of Health, established World Asthma Day and Asthma Awareness Month. Organizations working to improve asthma awareness and care around the world coordinate their activities throughout the month of May to increase public awareness of the asthma epidemic. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) plays a special role during this time because of our commitment to promoting awareness of indoor and outdoor pollutants that trigger asthma episodes.

The EPA developed this Event Planning Kit to encourage organizations in the U.S. to hold local events during Asthma Awareness Month. Inside you will find ideas for planning community asthma events. Be sure to check out the event spotlights to learn what successes your peers have had in the past. You will also find sample materials to use at your events.

Hundreds of asthma awareness events will take place across the United States this May. EPA can help publicize your event on our Web site. Either submit your event online (<http://asthmaevents.cadmusweb.com>) or fill out and mail the form on p. 16 and your event will be listed. We value your feedback on the usefulness of the enclosed materials and welcome any suggestions for future materials.

On behalf of EPA, I would like to thank you for sponsoring an asthma education activity in your community in support of Asthma Awareness Month. We look forward to assisting you with planning your asthma education events. Working together, we can help families take control of asthma.

Sincerely,

Kim Durkin
Asthma Awareness Month Coordinator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency



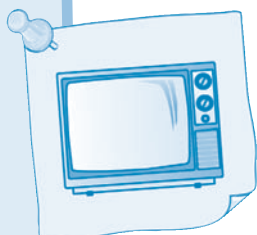
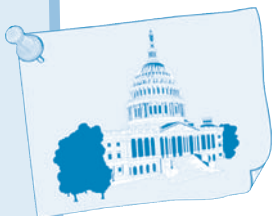


Asthma Awareness Activities

May is Asthma Awareness Month!

There is no better time to promote asthma education, including management of environmental triggers. Join EPA to plan an educational event for your community. Things to do include:

- ▶ Hold an asthma awareness event that is open to the public with elected officials and local celebrities. Ask your governor or mayor to issue an Asthma Awareness Month proclamation (see template on page 13). Have an EPA or health official make a brief presentation on asthma and your organization's efforts to combat the disease. Issue a press release announcing the event (see template on page 14).
- ▶ Sponsor an asthma awareness event at a local school, library, hospital, health clinic, or state capitol. Partner with other local organizations involved in asthma education in order to pool resources and increase attention and publicity for the event.
- ▶ Find out if any local leaders or celebrities have asthma and ask them to participate in your event.
- ▶ Arrange to display and distribute asthma educational materials at local sporting events (e.g., baseball, soccer).
- ▶ Sponsor an asthma awareness event with your local PBS station featuring the All About Asthma module of the Arthur Health Curriculum and the "Buster's Breathless" episode of ARTHUR®. To visit ARTHUR®'s Web site, go to <http://pbskids.org/arthur>.
- ▶ Ask local television and radio stations to include EPA's asthma and secondhand smoke public service announcements in their programming.
- ▶ Schedule local TV and radio interviews to talk about asthma and your organization's programs to educate the public on the role environmental asthma triggers play in the exacerbation of asthma.
- ▶ Contact area health insurers and managed care organizations to promote asthma education. See page 9 for a list of possible activities.
- ▶ Contact the National Association of School Nurses (NASN) or the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America (AAFA) to arrange professional educational seminars, such as AAFA's "Asthma Management and Education Program," for health professionals.
- ▶ Introduce local schools to the *Indoor Air Quality Tools for Schools* Kit to protect all children from asthma triggers.



Ideas for Asthma Awareness Activities *(continued)*

- ▶ Contact state or local education associations for support in sponsoring asthma awareness activities in your local schools.
- ▶ Sponsor an asthma walkathon. Invite local partners, hospitals, and pharmaceutical companies to provide asthma educational displays and materials.
- ▶ Contact area university medical schools and/or allied health programs such as nursing, respiratory therapy, or pharmacy to get their students involved in your event.
- ▶ Hold an asthma health fair offering free pulmonary screenings and education on environmental asthma triggers and management. Ask local partners, hospitals, and pharmaceutical companies to provide educational displays and materials.
- ▶ Ask local hospitals, clinics, doctors' offices, and pharmacies to display and distribute asthma educational materials.
- ▶ Arrange to display and distribute asthma educational brochures at public libraries, community centers, or other popular places.
- ▶ Ask local chapters of health professional organizations (i.e., respiratory therapists, nurses, pulmonologists, and pediatricians) to include articles in their newsletters on the role environmental asthma triggers play in the development and exacerbation of asthma, and encourage them to incorporate environmental control in their patients' asthma management plans.

Event Spotlight: Asthma Awareness Poker Walk



Where and when did the event take place?

The Bad River Community Center in Odanah, Wisconsin, on May 20, 2008.

What happened at the event?

The Bad River Air Quality Department held a one-mile community walk to raise awareness about asthma and generate excitement about exercising and its benefits. Participants collected five cards as they walked a mile and the person with the best poker hand at the end, won an asthma-friendly basket of prizes.

What resources were used for the event?

Resources from EPA were distributed - Dusty the Asthma Goldfish Funbooks and bookmarks; The Asthma Home Environment Checklist; t-shirts that said "Don't let Asthma leave you breathless."

How did this event help raise asthma awareness?

With over 52 participants the Asthma Awareness Poker Walk encouraged a community to get up, exercise, and learn about asthma.

Interested in materials designed for kids? Check out the Materials Order Form at the back of this Kit.



Communities in Action for Asthma-Friendly Environments



2009 National Asthma Forum: Sharing, Learning, and Taking Action Together

Join asthma leaders from across the nation to share best practices and discuss effective strategies for managing asthma in your community.

Attend EPA's *Communities in Action for Asthma-Friendly Environments* National Forum from June 4-5, 2009 in Washington, D.C.

Join the Online Community Network!

EPA's *Communities in Action for Asthma-Friendly Environments* Online Network is a year-round resource for mentoring and collaboration. It's designed to provide the tools, information, and partners to support your asthma management program.

Visit the site and join us!
www.asthmacommunitynetwork.org



May is Asthma Awareness Month!

There is no better time to promote asthma education, especially management of environmental triggers. Join EPA to plan an educational event for staff, parents, and students at a local school. To do this, you will need the support of the school or district administration, school nurse, and other key staff. Things to do include:

▼ Plan asthma educational activities at the school:

- ▶ Offer asthma education on environmental asthma triggers and management during in-service days for teachers, custodians, and other school staff;
- ▶ Offer asthma education for parents at local PTA/PTO meetings or other similar events;
- ▶ Read children's books on asthma to students, such as *Taking Asthma to School*, *Zoo Allergy*, and *The ABC's of Asthma*, by Kim Gosselin;
- ▶ Show the Arthur® video, "Buster's Breathless;"
- ▶ Arrange a school-wide assembly with guest speakers, such as kids with asthma, local celebrities, TV personalities, or local doctors or politicians;
- ▶ Organize an asthma poster contest for children;
- ▶ Coordinate with the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America (AAFA) to launch a *Power Breathing* Program for middle and high school students with asthma;
- ▶ Sponsor a staff breakfast or lunch and introduce the *Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) Tools for Schools* Program;
- ▶ Design asthma awareness bulletin boards or other displays for students and staff;
- ▶ Encourage teachers to incorporate asthma and the environment into appropriate curricula, e.g., science and health;
- ▶ Include asthma awareness information in school newsletters and other packets sent home to parents/guardians; and
- ▶ Conduct a walkthrough of your school to determine if asthma triggers exist. If triggers are found, a remediation plan should be developed and implemented as soon as possible. See the *IAQ Tools for Schools* Kit for assistance.

- ▼ **Recruit local sponsors to provide giveaways or support. Potential sponsors include area businesses and organizations—such as the local chapter of the American Lung Association (ALA) or AAFA—that may assist in asthma events or trainings.**

- ▼ **Publicize your event(s) and Asthma Awareness Month on the school bulletin board or Web site, in the school newsletter, in state and local education association newsletters and Web sites, flyers, PTA announcements, local newspapers, and local media.**

Event Spotlight: Asthma Health Fair in Gresham, South Carolina



Where and when did the event take place?

Britton's Neck Elementary School on May 27, 2008.

What happened?

A nutritionist spoke on the relationship between obesity and asthma and a doctor from Asthma, Allergy and Associates taught children about peak/pep-flow meters and showed them the difference between a normal lung and an asthmatic lung.

What resources were used for the event?

The American Lung Association's Asthma Emergency Guide for Parents and EPA's book "Help Your Child Gain Control Over Asthma" were distributed.

How did this event help raise asthma awareness?

The Asthma Health Fair educated over 300 attendees, including students, teachers, and parents, helping them gain a better understanding of asthma and its treatment.

How to Plan an Asthma Education Event in Your School *(continued)*

- ▼ Asthma educational materials are available for students, teachers, nurses, school officials, parents, and the community. EPA's materials are free!
 - ▶ "Clear Your Home of Asthma Triggers" brochure
 - ▶ "Take the Smoke-Free Home Pledge" brochure and poster
 - ▶ "Dusty and His Asthma Triggers" children's funbook – available in English and Spanish
 - ▶ "Breathing Freely: Controlling Asthma Triggers" video – available in English and Spanish
 - ▶ "Help Your Child Gain Control Over Asthma" – available in English and Spanish

See the order form on page 17 or go to www.epa.gov/asthma



Ten Ways to Manage Asthma in the School Environment

1 Use the *IAQ Tools for Schools Kit*

- ▶ Improve the school environment with Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) practices recommended in this Kit. To order the free Kit, go to www.epa.gov/iaq/schools.

2

Control Animal Allergens

- ▶ Remove warm-blooded animals from the classroom and school.

3

Control Cockroach Allergens

- ▶ Use integrated pest management practices to prevent cockroach and other pest problems (e.g., store food in tightly sealed containers and place dumpsters away from the building).

4

Clean Up Mold and Control Moisture

- ▶ Fix moisture problems and thoroughly dry wet areas within 24-48 hours to prevent mold growth.
- ▶ Clean up hard, moldy surfaces with water and detergent, and then dry thoroughly.

5

Eliminate Secondhand Smoke Exposure

- ▶ Enforce no-smoking policies in the school.

6

Reduce Dust Mite Exposure

- ▶ Make sure the school is dusted and vacuumed thoroughly and regularly.

7

Develop an Asthma Management Plan

- ▶ Include school policies on inhaler and other medication usage and emergency procedures for school staff to follow for asthma attacks.
- ▶ Make sure students with asthma obtain and turn in copies of their Asthma Action Cards to

teachers, the school nurse, etc.

- ▶ Encourage students to identify and manage their asthma triggers.
- ▶ Obtain the National Asthma Education and Prevention Program's *Managing Asthma: A Guide for Schools* at www.nhlbi.nih.gov.

8

Provide School-Based Asthma Education Programs

- ▶ Contact your local American Lung Association about *Open Airways for Schools*, a school-based asthma management program for students age 8-11.
- ▶ Contact the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America about *Asthma Care Training for Kids and Parents*, an education program for kids age 7-12.

9

Reduce School Bus Diesel Exhaust

- ▶ Replace the oldest buses in the fleet with new ones.
- ▶ Install effective emission control systems on newer buses.
- ▶ Encourage policies and practices to eliminate unnecessary school bus idling.
- ▶ Visit www.epa.gov/cleanschoolbus to learn more about EPA's Clean School Bus USA Program.

10

Gather Additional Asthma Resources

- ▶ Establish a complete file on existing asthma and allergy-related information sources to reference throughout the school year.
- ▶ Ask the National Association of School Nurses to offer their course, *Managing Asthma Triggers*, to nurses in your district. www.nasn.org
- ▶ Visit EPA's asthma Web site at www.epa.gov/asthma.



Plan an Asthma Education Event at a Local Hospital or Clinic

May is Asthma Awareness Month!

There is no better time to promote asthma education, including management of environmental triggers. Join EPA to plan an educational event for staff, patients, and the public at a local hospital or clinic. To do this, you will need the support of hospital or clinic management and key staff. Things to do include:

- ▼ **Conduct asthma educational trainings and coordinate activities at the local hospital or clinic:**
 - ▶ Offer asthma education on environmental asthma triggers and management;
 - ▶ Incorporate asthma into health fairs;
 - ▶ Show the ARTHUR® video, “Buster’s Breathless,” and EPA’s asthma public service announcement;
 - ▶ Educate parents on asthma and the risks of secondhand smoke;
 - ▶ Provide guest speakers—such as asthma patients, doctors, nurses, or TV personalities—to describe how to live with asthma; and
- ▼ **Recruit local sponsors to provide giveaways or support. Potential sponsors include area businesses and organizations—such as the local chapter of the American Lung Association—that may assist in asthma events or trainings.**
- ▼ **Contact the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America about conducting an “Asthma Management and Education” training for health professionals who educate and care for patients with asthma.**
- ▼ **Contact the American Association for Respiratory Care (AARC) to obtain the “Environmental Triggers of Asthma” CD-ROM continuing education course for respiratory therapists.**
- ▼ **Issue press releases and publicize your event in newsletters, patient information packets, on Web sites, and through local media or schedule a press conference.**

And remember...

- ▼ **Distribute asthma materials to patients, hospital or clinic staff, and families with prescriptions. The following are some of the free asthma education resources available to you:**
 - ▶ “Clear Your Home of Asthma Triggers” brochure;
 - ▶ “Take the Smoke-Free Home Pledge” brochure and poster;
 - ▶ “Dusty and His Asthma Triggers” children’s funbook;
 - ▶ “Breathing Freely: Controlling Asthma Triggers” video;
 - ▶ “Help Your Child Gain Control Over Asthma” booklet;
 - ▶ Asthma public service announcements

Event Spotlight: Asthma Display at Children’s Memorial Hospital



Where and when did the event take place?

Children’s Memorial Hospital in Chicago, Illinois, on May 1, 2007, from 8am - 6pm.

What happened at the event?

Hospital staff organized an asthma information display in the lobby of the hospital to help educate the community about living with asthma and to recruit participants for an asthma study. The staff handed out asthma information and spoke to patients from the inner-city community served by the hospital.

What resources were used for the event?

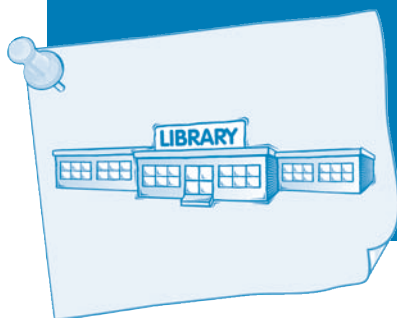
Free materials in English and Spanish provided by EPA and the American Lung Association; posters; and display booklets and inhalers borrowed from the hospital.

How did this event help raise asthma awareness?

Around 100 asthma patients and their family members visited the display to talk to the staff and gain a better understanding of how to manage asthma.

Interested in including bilingual resources at your event? Check out the Materials Order form at the back of this Kit.





Plan an Asthma Education Event at a Local Library

May is Asthma Awareness Month!

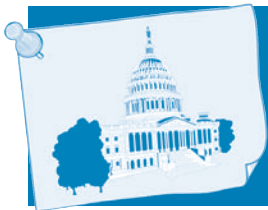
There is no better time to promote asthma education, including management of environmental triggers. Join EPA to plan an educational event for children and the community at a local library. To do this, you will need the support of the library staff, particularly the Director of Children's Programming. Things to do include:

- ▼ **Schedule a children's reading time dedicated to asthma. Consider reading the following books, written by Kim Gosselin:**
 - ▶ *Taking Asthma to School,*
 - ▶ *Zoo Allergy,* and
 - ▶ *The ABC's of Asthma.*
- ▼ **Publicize your event in library newsletters, flyers, on Web sites, bulletin boards, and through local media.**
- ▼ **Plan a book fair with a health theme. Invite local expert speakers to provide "mini-seminars" on asthma and related topics at the library throughout the day.**
- ▼ **Host a family fun night with stories, movies, refreshments, and games like asthma bingo.**
- ▼ **Create an asthma display in a prominent location in the library. Provide asthma materials for library visitors to learn more.**

And remember...

- ▼ **Distribute asthma materials to library visitors. Free EPA materials are available to you in both English and Spanish:**
 - ▶ "Clear Your Home of Asthma Triggers" brochure;
 - ▶ "Take the Smoke-Free Home Pledge" brochure and poster;
 - ▶ "Dusty and His Asthma Triggers" children's funbook;
 - ▶ "Breathing Freely: Controlling Asthma Triggers" video;
 - ▶ "Help Your Child Gain Control Over Asthma" booklet;
 - ▶ Asthma public service announcements





PLAN AN EVENT AT YOUR STATE CAPITAL

Plan an Event at Your State Capital

May is Asthma Awareness Month!

There is no better time to promote asthma education, including management of environmental triggers. Join EPA to plan an educational event in your state's capitol building. To do this, you will need the support of government officials and local communities. Things to do include:

- ▼ **Contact your state legislator to sponsor your event. His/Her office can help you obtain space in the state capitol building. You will most likely be asked to coordinate details with the capitol's operations office.**
- ▼ **Sponsor education activities in the state capitol building. Partner with other local organizations involved in asthma education in order to pool resources and increase attention and publicity for the event.**
- ▼ **Issue an asthma proclamation (see sample on page 13).**
- ▼ **Plan a health fair providing free asthma screenings and education on environmental asthma triggers and management. Recruit local sponsors to provide giveaways or funding to support the health fair and assist in setting up asthma screenings. Potential sponsors include area doctors, respiratory care departments, businesses, and non-profit organizations.**
- ▼ **Hold a press conference to announce the state's partnership as well as encourage the state as a whole to participate.**
- ▼ **Issue press releases and publicize your event in local newsletters, the state's Web site, and local media.**
- ▼ **Work with the state's press office to set up interviews with experts in the field, people who have asthma, and government officials. The press office can also set up meetings for state officials and local organizations to visit schools and daycare facilities to promote asthma management.**
- ▼ **Remember to plan your event well in advance to address any security concerns.**

Event Spotlight: World Asthma Day Legislative Breakfast, Ohio Asthma Coalition



Where and when did the event take place?

The Hyatt at Capitol Square in Columbus, Ohio, on May 1, 2007

What happened at the event?

The Ohio Asthma Coalition (OAC) held a networking breakfast for legislators and coalition members. After remarks by the chair of the Ohio Asthma Coalition and the introduction of the legislators and legislative aids, participants engaged in conversations and generated ideas to promote improving asthma care and management.

How was the event organized?

The OAC advocacy committee was essential in the event planning as they utilized their knowledge of the legislative process and their connection with the legislators and aids.

A resource table with various EPA asthma materials was also set up to allow people to gather information and resources on asthma.

How did this event help raise asthma awareness?

The 75 attendees were able to discuss ways that they could work together and create awareness of the importance and impact of asthma on Ohioans. After this event, the committee increased their efforts to form a legislative caucus to meet and talk with the coalition on an ongoing basis.

And remember...

- ▼ **Distribute asthma materials within state offices and to the general public. Free EPA materials are available to you in both English and Spanish:**
 - ▶ "Clear Your Home of Asthma Triggers" brochure;
 - ▶ "Take the Smoke-Free Home Pledge" brochure and poster;
 - ▶ "Dusty and His Asthma Triggers" children's funbook;
 - ▶ "Breathing Freely: Controlling Asthma Triggers" video;
 - ▶ "Help Your Child Gain Control Over Asthma" booklet;
 - ▶ Asthma public service announcements





Asthma Education Ideas

for Health Insurers and Managed Care Organizations

May is Asthma Awareness Month!

There is no better time to promote asthma education, including management of environmental triggers. Join EPA to plan an educational event for patients and providers. Things to do include:

- ▼ Place an article in a newsletter or e-bulletin to educate patients about asthma, environmental triggers, and ways to manage asthma.
- ▼ Distribute asthma materials to providers (hospitals, specialists, and physicians) to educate them about comprehensive asthma management for patients. In addition, co-sponsor a one-day training for providers with a local chapter of the American Lung Association or Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America.
- ▼ Contact the American Association for Respiratory Care (AARC) to obtain the “Environmental Triggers of Asthma” CD-ROM for continuing education of respiratory therapists in your network.
- ▼ Host a health fair in a community setting, such as a hospital or area high school. Distribute information about asthma management and methods to identify and mitigate indoor environmental triggers. Recruit local sponsors to provide giveaways or support. Examples of donated materials include items helpful in mitigating indoor environmental triggers, such as pillow or mattress covers or HEPA filters for vacuums.
- ▼ Encourage hospitals and physicians to run EPA asthma education, videos, and public service campaigns in closed circuit television in patient waiting rooms.
- ▼ Sponsor an asthma awareness event in a local school setting and educate students, teachers and faculty about ways to manage asthma in the school environment. Distribute asthma action plans to school nurses and students.
- ▼ Honor outstanding providers in your network with an “Asthma Award of the Year” for demonstrating excellent leadership in comprehensively managing patient asthma and increasing asthma awareness with patients.
- ▼ Conduct an in-home environmental assessment in select homes in locations with a high prevalence of asthma. Display these homes as models to showcase the importance of managing indoor environmental triggers.
- ▼ Join the online network *Communities in Action for Asthma-Friendly Environments*. Access tools, partners, and information at www.asthmacommunitynetwork.org.

And remember...

- ▼ Asthma educational materials are available for your event. EPA’s free materials are available to you in both English and Spanish:
 - ▶ “Clear Your Home of Asthma Triggers” brochure
 - ▶ “Take the Smoke-Free Home Pledge” brochure and poster
 - ▶ “Implementing an Asthma Home Visit Program: 10 Steps to Help Health Plans Get Started” brochure
 - ▶ “Asthma Home Environment Check List”





Media Outreach Tips

May is Asthma Awareness Month!

A successful media outreach approach can increase the success of your event. The following tips will help you and capture media attention for your asthma activity, event, or program.

Tell the asthma story.

One way to gain the media's attention is to provide facts about the dangers of asthma to public health. Asthma affects about 22 million people in America and is one of the leading causes of childhood hospitalization.

▼ Build successful relationships with the media.

- ▶ Establish a list of national and local media, taking note of beat reporters. Beat reporters are assigned to a specific area or topic, such as community health and science.
- ▶ Contact beat reporters and editors to introduce yourself and to establish a point of contact for information.

▼ Start with a good media list.

A good list is one that is relevant and accurate. In choosing whom to approach, it is important to consider who is likely to want to tell your asthma story, as well as whom you would like to do it. You may want to include small newspapers and community newsletters, in addition to major newspapers and television and radio stations.

▼ Contact the right person.

At major newspapers and television and radio stations, it is appropriate to contact the assignment editor. Your local library may have a media guide listing names and addresses of people you may want to contact. Be sure to get your contact's e-mail address. Many reporters prefer to get releases by e-mail rather than hard copy.

▼ Write a good pitch letter.

After you have a targeted list of reporters and editors, you will need to write a pitch letter. The pitch letter alerts editors and reporters to your story and why they should cover asthma issues (see page 11 for tips).

Sample Media Outlets

- ▶ Local newspapers
- ▶ Health producer at a local news station
- ▶ Radio stations
- ▶ Web staff at a local newspaper or broadcast outlet
- ▶ Parenting magazines
- ▶ Hospital medical newsletters
- ▶ Online bulletin boards for your neighborhood
- ▶ Student newspapers at an elementary, middle, or high school or at a college or university
- ▶ Does your area include Hispanic media? Don't forget to reach out to Spanish-language or other media targeted toward an ethnic or non-English-speaking demographic



▼ Write a press release.

A well written press release can yield more media coverage than any amount of advertising could bring to asthma (see page 14 for a sample press release).

▼ Develop a media kit.

Make it as easy as possible for the media to do their jobs. Provide them with statistical information about asthma from reputable sources and provide simple graphics if you have them. Anything you can do to make it easy for reporters to write a story will help. Put together a media kit with a full range of information about asthma issues, environmental triggers, and the specifics of your asthma event. A media kit can include the following materials:

- ▶ Pitch letter
- ▶ Press release (see page 14)
- ▶ Asthma fact sheet (see page 12)
- ▶ Asthma materials order form (see page 17)
- ▶ Proclamation (see page 13)
- ▶ Calendar of events
- ▶ Your contact information
- ▶ Web site addresses, as appropriate



Media Outreach Tips *(continued)*

▼ Follow up.

You've sent your materials out to the reporters and editors on your list and allowed time for them to look over the information. Now it's time to make follow-up calls. During your follow-up calls, you should:

- ▶ Be prepared. Make notes for your calls and be prepared to take notes during the calls. Plan what you are going to say ahead of time and stick to it. Try to anticipate any questions or objections you might hear and have an answer prepared.
- ▶ Be polite and brief. Editors and reporters are usually on a very tight schedule and they will appreciate it if you get right to the point. Identify yourself, tell them why you are calling, and offer to answer any questions they may have.
- ▶ Ask for coverage. After you have confirmed receipt of your letter and answered any questions, ask for coverage of your event.

- ▶ Provide all the information journalists need to cover the story. Make sure your pitch covers the "Who, What, When, Where, Why, and How" of the story. Include your contact information, list possible sources, and include any relevant background material. If you have written a press release, paste that into the e-mail.
- ▶ If you are pitching a broadcast outlet, remember that they are interested in gathering video footage. Tell them about possible photo-ops or events.

▼ News Pegs

Journalists often look for "news pegs," which make a discussion of a broad issue relevant to the moment and "newsworthy." When trying to obtain coverage of asthma issues, look for news pegs and point them out to the media when you speak to them. News pegs can be breaking news, or a simple event that brings a story into focus or makes it more timely. Below are some possible asthma-related news pegs that can help frame other media pitches and guide your discussions with reporters.

- ▶ May is Asthma Awareness Month! This "month" is a great reason to promote asthma awareness. World Asthma Day, organized by the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, National Institutes of Health, and the World Health Organization, also falls during this time.
- ▶ Discuss the impacts of asthma on your community by sharing hospitalizations and emergency visit statistics and prevention methods through reducing environmental triggers.
- ▶ Any speech, rally, event, or meeting can be an opportunity to involve the press.

Telling Your Asthma Story

▼ How to Pitch a Story

Pitching a news story to a reporter, editor, or producer can seem intimidating, but it is not difficult if you prepare yourself adequately. The most effective way to contact the media with a story idea is through a "pitch letter," which provides the reporter or media with all the information they need to pursue the story.

▼ Use the following tips to write a good pitch letter:

- ▶ E-mail is often the best way to get your letter in front of the right person. Plan to follow up your e-mail with a timely phone call.
- ▶ Keep it short. Journalists don't have much time to spend each day reading pitches. Begin your pitch with your most compelling information to grab the reader's interest, and explain the story in just a few paragraphs. If you have a news peg (see next section), make it clear at the beginning of the letter.





Asthma Facts

▼ Asthma is a rapidly growing public health problem. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

- ▶ About 23 million people, including 6.8 million children, have asthma. ¹
- ▶ Asthma prevalence is higher among families with lower incomes.
- ▶ 12 million people report having an asthma attack in the past year. ²
- ▶ Asthma accounts for nearly 17 million physician office and hospital visits, ³ and nearly 2 million emergency department visits each year. ²

▼ African Americans continue to have higher rates of asthma emergency department visits, hospitalizations, and deaths than do Caucasians:

- ▶ The rate of emergency department visits is 350% higher. ²
- ▶ The hospitalization rate is 240% higher. ²
- ▶ The asthma death rate is 200% higher. ²

▼ Approximately 2 million Hispanics in the U.S. have asthma and Puerto Ricans are disproportionately impacted:

- ▶ The rate of asthma among Puerto Ricans is 125% higher than non-Hispanic white people and 80% higher than non-Hispanic black people. ²
- ▶ The prevalence of asthma attacks is highest among Puerto Ricans. ²

▼ Asthma in Children

- ▶ Asthma is one of the most common serious chronic diseases of childhood.
- ▶ Asthma is the third-ranking cause of hospitalization among children under 15. ⁴
- ▶ An average of one out of every 10 school-aged children has asthma. ⁵
- ▶ 13 million school days are missed each year due to asthma. ⁶

▼ The Cost of Asthma

Annual expenditures for health and lost productivity due to asthma are estimated at nearly \$20 billion, according to the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute. ⁷

▼ Environmental Factors

Indoor and outdoor environmental factors can trigger asthma attacks: dust mites, molds, cockroaches, pet dander, and secondhand smoke.

▼ Asthma Can be Controlled

With a plan that includes medicine and control of environmental triggers, people with asthma can lead healthy, active lives.

References

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3. National Ambulatory Medical Care Survey: 2006 Summary, Table 12 <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nhsr/nhsr003.pdf>.
4. DeFrances CJ, Cullen KA, Kozak LJ. National Hospital Discharge Survey: 2005 Annual Summary with Detailed Diagnosis and Procedure Data. National Center for Health Statistics. Vital Health Statistics 12 (165); 2007. http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/series/sr_13/sr13_165.pdf.
5. American Lung Association, Epidemiology and Statistics Unit, Research and Program Services. Trends in Asthma Morbidity and Mortality. November 2007. (ALA age group analysis of NHIS through 2005) http://www.lungusa.org/atf/cf/%7B7a8d42c2-fcca-4604-8ade-7f5d5e762256%7D/ASTHMA_TREND_Nov2007.PDF.
6. Akinbami LJ. The State of Childhood Asthma, United States, 1980-2005, Advance Data from Vital and Health Statistics: no 381, Revised December 29, 2006, Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics, 2006 (NHIS 2003 absenteeism). <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/ad/ad381.pdf>.
7. National Heart; Lung and Blood Institute Chartbook on Cardiovascular, Lung and Blood Diseases, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Institute of Health, 2007. <http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/resources/docs/07-chtbk.pdf>.



Sample Proclamation

From a Local Official

Enlist a well-known local official to issue a proclamation supporting events and activities during May, Asthma Awareness Month. Below is a sample proclamation that can serve as a guide.

YOUR CITY, COUNTY, OR STATE



YOUR GOVERNMENTAL OFFICE

[COUNTY EXECUTIVE'S, MAYOR'S, GOVERNOR'S]
PROCLAMATION IN SUPPORT OF ASTHMA AWARENESS MONTH
IN [COUNTY, CITY, OR STATE]

WHEREAS, asthma has reached epidemic proportions in the United States, affecting about 23 million people; [INSERT STATE PREVALENCE]

WHEREAS, asthma is one of the leading causes of childhood hospitalizations, long-term illness, and school absenteeism, accounting for nearly 13 million missed school days each year;

WHEREAS, each year nearly 2 million people are rushed to the emergency room and nearly 4,000 people die from asthma;

WHEREAS, asthma is a long-term, inflammatory disease in which the airways of the lungs constrict, causing wheezing, breathlessness, chest tightness, and coughing;

WHEREAS, exposure to allergens and irritants such as dust mites, mold, cockroaches, pet dander, and secondhand smoke can bring on an asthma episode;

WHEREAS, secondhand smoke worsens children's asthma in up to one million children;

WHEREAS, there are simple steps people can take to reduce their exposure to environmental asthma triggers;

WHEREAS, [your organization] and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency are encouraging Americans to identify and reduce their exposures to environmental triggers in homes and schools, and incorporate environmental controls into their asthma management plans.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, [name], [title] of [county, city, or state] do hereby proclaim:

May [Year]
Asthma Awareness Month
In [County, City, or State]

(Signature of Official)





Press Release

Template

This template can be customized to highlight your asthma awareness event. Learn specific information about the number of children with asthma in your state from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Web site at www.cdc.gov/asthma. Include this information in your press release.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: [Name]
[Phone Number]
[Email Address]

[YOUR COMMUNITY] CELEBRATES ASTHMA AWARENESS MONTH

[PLACE-Release DATE]- In the United States alone, more than 6 million children have asthma, [INSERT LOCAL PREVALENCE] which is one of the most common serious chronic diseases of childhood. In addition, asthma is a leading cause of hospitalization, emergency department visits, and school absenteeism [insert your state specific asthma statistics].

In response to these alarming statistics, and in an effort to raise public awareness of the risks faced everyday by about 23 million Americans living with asthma [INSERT STATE AND/OR LOCAL PREVALENCE], [YOUR ORGANIZATION] is joining the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to participate in Asthma Awareness Month and World Asthma Day. [YOUR ORGANIZATION] is holding a [NAME OF EVENT] on [DATE] at [LOCATION] in [CITY].

All across the world, events are being held in May as part of Asthma Awareness Month. Join [YOUR ORGANIZATION] and EPA at events nationwide during May. Each event will raise awareness about indoor and outdoor pollutants that trigger asthma and ways to prevent asthma episodes.

For more information on EPA's Asthma Program and Asthma Awareness Month, log on to www.epa.gov/asthma and [YOUR ORGANIZATION'S WEB SITE].





Asthma Awareness Month

National Organizations & EPA Regional Contacts

Asthma Awareness Month National Organizations Contacts

For more information on Asthma Awareness Month, contact:

Allergy and Asthma Network Mothers of Asthmatics

1-800-878-4403
www.aanma.org

American Academy of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology

414-272-6071
www.aaaai.org

American Academy of Pediatrics

847-434-4000
www.aap.org

American Association for Respiratory Care

972-243-2272
www.aarc.org

American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology

847-427-1200
www.acaai.org

American College of CHEST Physicians

847-498-1400, 1-800-343-2227
www.chestnet.org

American Lung Association

1-800-LUNG-USA (1-800-586-4872)
www.lungusa.org

Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America

1-800-7-ASTHMA (1-800-727-8462)
www.aafa.org

Asthma Goldfish PSA Campaign

1-866-NO-ATTACKS (1-866-662-8822)
www.noattacks.org
www.epapsa.com

Global Initiative for Asthma

www.ginasthma.com

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

1-888-232-6348
www.cdc.gov/asthma

National Association of School Nurses

1-866-627-6767
www.nasn.org

National Education Association Health Information Network

202-822-7570
www.neahin.org

National Asthma Education and Prevention Program, National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute

301-592-8573
www.nhlbi.nih.gov/index.htm

Environmental Protection Agency, IAQ INFO

1-800-438-4318
www.epa.gov/asthma

Asthma Awareness Month EPA Regional Contacts

Region 1 – CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT

Contact: Eugene Benoit
 617-918-1639 or
 1-888-372-7341

Region 2 – NJ, NY, PR, VI

Contact: Ameesha Mehta-Samphath
 212-637-4006

Region 3 – DE, DC, MD, PA, VA, WV

Contact: Janice Lewis
 215-814-2185

Region 4 – AL, FL, GA, KY, MS, NC, SC, TN

Contact: Linda Thomas-Houston
 404-562-9152 or
 1-800-241-1754

Region 5 – IL, IN, MI, MN, OH, WI

Contact: Sheila Batka
 312-886-6053 or
 1-800-621-8431
 Lara Lasky
 312-353-5614

Region 6 – AR, LA, NM, OK, TX

Contact: Paula Selzer
 214-665-6663
 1-800-887-6063

Region 7 – IA, KS, MO, NE

Contact: Vickie Angell
 913-551-7269 or
 1-800-223-0425

Region 8 – CO, MT, ND, SD, UT, WY

Contact: Ron Schiller
 303-312-6017 or
 1-800-227-8917

Region 9 – AS, AZ, CA, GU, HI, NV

Contact: Barbara Spark
 415-947-4189

Region 10 – AK, ID, OR, WA

Contact: Susan Titus
 1-800-424-4372 x1189 or
 206-553-1189





Event Listing Form

Asthma Awareness Month

To list your Asthma Awareness Month events on the Environmental Protection Agency's Asthma Web site at www.epa.gov/asthma, please complete the form below and return it to:

E-Mail: WAD@cadmusgroup.com

Fax: 703-247-6041

Attn: Katie Heffner

You can also enter information about your Asthma Awareness Month events at <http://asthmaevents.cadmusweb.com>

Use one form per event. Please enter all information.

SPONSORING ORGANIZATION _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

PHONE _____ FAX _____ E-MAIL _____

NAME OF EVENT _____

DATE & TIME OF EVENT _____

LOCATION OF EVENT _____

EVENT WEB SITE _____

STREET ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

NAME AND TELEPHONE OF PERSON TO CALL FOR MORE INFORMATION _____

Brief description of the event:

What materials did you find most useful in planning your asthma education event?

What additional materials or assistance would help you sponsor asthma events in the future?



Materials Order Form Asthma Awareness Month

To order materials for your Asthma Awareness Month activities, fax this completed order form to NSCEP at 301-604-3408. Allow 2-3 weeks for delivery.

NAME _____ DATE _____

SPONSORING ORGANIZATION _____

MAILING ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

PHONE _____ FAX _____ E-MAIL _____

NAME/TYPE OF EVENT PLANNED _____

DATE, TIME, LOCATION OF EVENT _____

EVENT WEB SITE _____

Supplies are limited and are available on a first come basis. Materials may be ordered through May 31, 2009. To ensure you receive your materials in time for your event, please place your order at least 60 days in advance. Many of EPA's Asthma materials are available for download on EPA's Web site at www.epa.gov/asthma/publications.html.

Quantity

"Breathing Freely: Controlling Asthma Triggers"	
_____	English VHS.....402-V-04-001
_____	Spanish VHS.....402-V-04-002
_____	English / Spanish DVD.....402-C-06-001
"Help Your Child Gain Control Over Asthma" (English version).....402-F-04-021	
_____	"Help Your Child Gain Control Over Asthma" (Spanish version).....402-F-05-021
"Dusty and His Asthma Triggers" Children's Funbook – may order up to 100.....402-F-04-008	
_____	"Dusty and His Asthma Triggers" Children's Funbook (Spanish) – may order up to 100402-F-04-009
_____	"Dusty and His Asthma Triggers" Bookmark402-E-05-001
"Clear Your Home of Asthma Triggers: Your Children Will Breathe Easier"	
_____	English.....402-F-99-005
_____	Chinese.....402-F-99-005A
_____	Vietnamese402-F-99-005B
_____	Korean402-F-99-005C
_____	Spanish.....402-F-99-005D
_____	"What Can Trigger an Asthma Attack May Surprise You" (Kitten Poster)401-H-03-001
_____	"A Brief Guide to Mold, Moisture, and Your Home"402-K-02-003





Materials Order Form *(continued)* **Asthma Awareness Month**

_____	“Take the Smoke-Free Home Pledge” Brochure (Bilingual).....	402-F-04-002
_____	“Take the Smoke-Free Home Pledge” Poster (Bilingual)	402-H-04-001
_____	“Secondhand Smoke Community Action Kit” CD-ROM (Bilingual).....	402-C-06-005
_____	“Environmental Tobacco Smoke: A Health Hazard to Children” (Speakers Kit CD-ROM)	402-C-02-003
_____	“Asthma Home Environment Checklist”	402-F-03-030

Asthma public service announcements (TV, radio, print) in English and Spanish may be ordered online at www.epapsa.com.

“Buster’s Breathless” is available on the ARTHUR® home video, *Arthur Goes to the Doctor*, which can be purchased (\$9.95) by calling 1-800-949-8670.