# MOLINA HEALTHCARE

# Asthma and COPD Awareness

*breathe with ease[sm] and Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease*

## Wisconsin Newsletter • Fall 2011

# A Healthy School Year

Being back at school can be exciting for kids. New classrooms, new teachers and new friends can be fun. As the seasons change, you can help your child continue to enjoy the school year and be healthy. The more you understand your child's asthma and share with the school staff, the easier it is to manage your child's symptoms. This can help you prevent bad asthma attacks and keep your child healthy. Asthma does not have to control your child's life or future. There are things you can do every day to prevent asthma attacks.

**Here are some tips to help your child stay healthy throughout the school year:**

1. **Have an Asthma Action Plan.** Ask your healthcare provider for a written Asthma Action Plan to give to the school. This plan should tell school staff how to treat an asthma attack. It should also list the daily medicine your child takes to control his or her asthma. The healthcare provider may suggest that your child have extra medicine at school.

2. **Keep emergency phone numbers at school.** Make sure the school has a list of things that may trigger your child's asthma.

3. **Be aware of changes in weather and seasons.** Let the school know if any of these changes may affect your child's asthma and cause an attack.

4. **Meet with school staff.** Invite the school nurse or fitness teacher to your meeting with your child's teacher. That way everyone knows the needs of your child. Take the Asthma Action Plan to this meeting.

5. **Keep a peak flow meter and rescue inhaler for your child at school.** Make sure that the inhaler has not expired.

6. **If your child needs an inhaler or other treatment before P.E. or gym class, let the teachers know.** Make sure that the medicine is on hand or that the school staff knows where it is kept.

7. **If your child is going on a field trip make sure the teacher and other adults know the location of your child's medicine.**

8. **Talk with your child and make sure he or she understands the Asthma Action Plan.** Show your child where the teacher keeps the medicine to reduce worry.

Communicating with your child's school is important. Planning can help your child enjoy the school year.

# Need Help Quitting Smoking?

If you need help quitting, call Molina Healthcare's Smoke Free Program. Call 1-866-891-2320 for one-on-one help.

*You are receiving this newsletter as part of a Disease Management Program. If you do not want to receive this newsletter or participate in any Disease Management Program please let us know. Please call us at 1-866-891-2320.*

*All material in this newsletter is for information only. This does not replace your provider's advice.*

# Know When to Get the Help You Need for COPD

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) means you have chronic bronchitis, emphysema or both. People with COPD have trouble breathing. It is important to know when your symptoms are worse than normal. It is also important to know when to call your healthcare provider.

**Call your healthcare provider if any of the following occur:**

- Shortness of breath or wheezing increases and is quickly getting worse

- Coughing deepens or increases

- Mucus (sputum) you cough up changes in the color or increases

- Coughing up blood

- Swelling in your legs or stomach increases

- Signs of an infection (such as high fever or feeling poorly) develop

- Flu-like symptoms develop

- Your medicine is not working as well as usual

**Do not wait until your symptoms get worse. Call your healthcare provider right away for help.** You can also call Molina's 24-Hour Nurse Advice Line if you have questions about your symptoms or health care. Call 1-888-275-8750 (TTY: 1-866-735-2929). Nurses are there to take your call 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

# Keeping Track of Your Medicines Can Help You Stay Healthy

If you take medicine every day, it is easy to lose track. You may find yourself asking, "Did I take it this morning or was that yesterday?" It is easy to get confused. Some medicines must be taken at different times from others. Some must be taken with food and some on an empty stomach. Some even require self-testing before taking them. Taking your medicines correctly is important.

Molina Healthcare wants to help you take your medication as prescribed by your healthcare provider. Please consider making a checklist to help you with your medicines.

### *Making a Medication Checklist*

Making a medication checklist is easy and only takes a few minutes. Simply write down each medicine you take, along with the time of the day you should take it. Write down any special instructions. Include self-testing that needs to be done for that medicine (for example, blood sugar testing for insulin). Make a new list each week or make photocopies. Be sure to take your lists with you to your next health care appointment, along with your medicine bottles.

*An example of a checklist you might make is below (showing two days of the week):*

**Week of:** *November 20th*

| Medications | Instructions | Sun | Mon |
|---|---|---|---|
| Metformin 500 mg tablet | Take one tablet twice a day with food | ✓ 8am<br><br>✓ 5pm | ✓ 8am<br><br>5pm |
| Simvastatin 40 mg tablet | Take one tablet every night at bedtime | 9 pm | 9 pm |

### *Using a Medication Checklist*

Write the date at the top of each new checklist. Then check off medicines as you take them. If you are late taking a medicine, write down the time you actually took it. That way you will always know if you have taken your medicines. This information will help your healthcare provider know if your medicines are doing what they should.

Molina Healthcare is here to help! We have additional resources to assist you:

- For health questions, call the Nurse Advice Line at 1-888-275-8750 (TTY: 1-866-735-2929) 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

- For information on various health topics, go to our website at www.MolinaHealthcare.com.

# Are You Prepared to Beat the Flu Bug?

If you have a chronic condition such as asthma or COPD, you are at a higher risk for flu complications.

**Here are some simple steps you can take to reduce your risk for getting the flu:**
- Get the flu shot every year
- Do not touch your face
- Wash your hands often
- Avoid people who are sick

**If you have the flu, here are some of the symptoms you may feel:**
- Fever between 100-104°F and chills
- Fatigue and weakness
- Headache, aches and pains
- Chest discomfort, sneezing and cough

Take immediate action to avoid flu complications. The best thing to do when you get the flu is to stay home and get plenty of rest.

**Below are some treatment options for flu symptoms:**
- Over-the-counter medicines can help to reduce fever, aches, pains, stuffy nose, and sneezing
- Talk to your pharmacist or healthcare provider about the right medicine for you
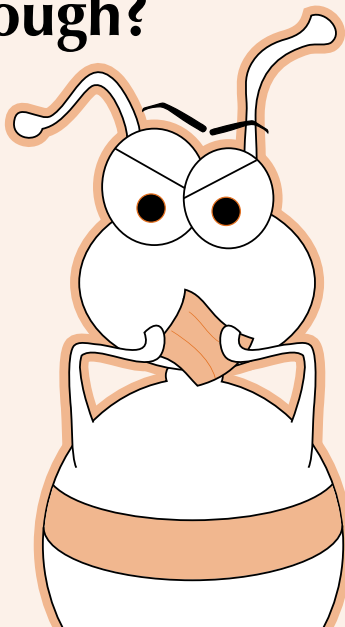- Get plenty of rest
- Drink plenty of fluids

Remember, the flu is a virus. This means antibiotics will not cure it. For more information about the flu, you can:
- Call your provider during office hours
- Call the Nurse Advice Line at 1-888-275-8750 (TTY: 1-866-735-2929) 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
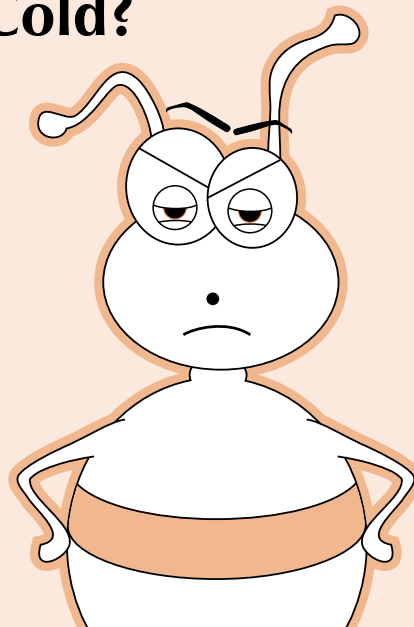- Visit our website at www.MolinaHealthcare.com

## Fever?
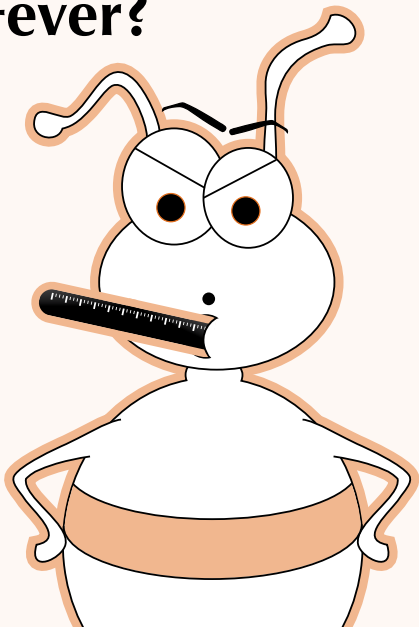
## Cough?

## Cold?

# Eat Healthier, Breathe Easier

For people with a lung disease, such as emphysema or Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD), eating a balanced and healthy diet is important. Eating healthy can help fight infections and prevent illness.

People who suffer from lung disease use a lot of energy to breathe. Some may use up to ten times the calories of a healthy person just trying to breathe. Proper nutrition helps to maintain the functions of the respiratory system and helps with breathing.

**Healthy Nutrition Tips:**

- **Drink plenty of fluids**. This helps to keep your airways clear of mucus. If you have a heart problem, talk with your healthcare provider about your recommended fluid intake amount.
- **Control your salt intake.** Salt may keep fluids in your body. This may cause swelling and make breathing harder.
- **Limit caffeine.** Caffeine can interfere with some medicines. It may make you feel nervous.

- **Eat a variety of foods.** This will help you get the nutrients you need. Make sure to include fruits, vegetables, whole grains, protein, and dairy products.
- **Avoid overeating and foods that may cause gas and bloating.** These foods may include fried or greasy foods, apples, dried beans, broccoli, and cabbage.
- **Eat four to five small healthy meals a day.** Large meals can make you feel full. This may make it hard to breathe.
- **Eat your main meal early in the day**. This may give you more energy during the day.
- **Choose healthy foods that are easy to fix**. Save your energy for eating. Make extra food and freeze it for quick meals.
- **Use your oxygen during meals (if you use oxygen).** Your body needs energy to eat and digest foods. This requires more oxygen.

Eating healthy can help you breathe easier and feel better. Talk to your healthcare provider about special dietary needs.

# Quit for Good

If you have not quit smoking, do it now! It is not too late to improve your quality of life and slow the progress of lung disease. It is the best thing you can do to live well with asthma or COPD. Quitting may be the hardest, but the most rewarding, thing you will ever do.

Nicotine is very addictive and people often try to stop two or three times before quitting for good. Studies have shown each time you quit you will become stronger and learn more about what it takes for you to quit for good. Molina Healthcare offers programs that can help you quit? There is no cost to Molina Healthcare members.

If you would like information on a program to help you stop smoking, call: 1-866-891-2320.

**MOLINA** ®
**HEALTHCARE**

2400 S. 102nd St
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# Questions about your health?

Call Our Nurse Advice Line!

English: 1-888-275-8750
Spanish: 1-866-648-3537

**OPEN 24 HOURS!**
Your family's health is our priority!

For the hearing impaired please call
TTY (English): 1-866-735-2929
TTY (Spanish): 1-866-833-4703
or 711

www.MolinaHealthcare.com