



## Asthma, Leaving Kids Breathless

By Doniese Wilcox, Certified Family Life Educator at Avera McKennan Hospital & University Health Center

“Coughing and wheezing are telltale signs a child may be suffering from asthma,” said Wilfredo Veloira Jr., MD, Pediatric Pulmonologist with Avera Medical Group Pediatric Specialists Sioux Falls. “The signs of asthma appear during the first year of life, when parents may notice excessive coughing, abnormal breathing and wheezing.”



In the U.S. alone, 7 million children under the age of 18 have asthma. That’s about one in 10 children.

Asthma is a chronic lung disease in which the airways narrow, swell and become irritated in response to various stimuli. Not only do the muscles surrounding the airways tighten, but excess mucus clogs the airways further — making breathing nearly impossible.

The result is an asthma attack, characterized by coughing, a wheezing or whistling sound, and chest tightness. (If your child is having difficulty breathing, but doesn’t have a treatment plan to manage the symptoms, get medical help immediately.)

“Common triggers include tobacco smoke, incense and perfumes, cold air, mold, and allergies to cats, dogs and pollen,” listed Veloira. “Viral infections, exercise and even emotions can induce an asthma attack in those with hypersensitive airways.”

The best way to manage asthma is through medication and eliminating exposure to allergens and airborne irritants.

In general, there are two categories of asthma medication: fast-acting medications that relieve asthma attacks and long-term medications that help control symptoms and prevent asthma attacks from occurring. Medications are typically delivered through an inhaler.

“The goal of these medications is to keep airway inflammation and hyper-reactivity to a minimum,” explained Veloira. “They may also help reduce the child’s sensitivity to triggers.”

Asthma doesn’t exactly disappear when a child grows and gets older. With larger lungs and less sensitive airways, asthma can lie dormant in the body, yet reawaken under the right conditions. That’s why proper management is important for long-term success.

## Read, Read, Read!

Raising children who enjoy books begins with taking time to read to them during their most formative years — as young as infancy. “If parents took just 10 minutes, twice a day, to read to their child, it would be a revolution in education,” said Doniese Wilcox, Certified Family Life Educator at Avera McKennan Hospital & University Health Center. “Reading is the initial key to anything.”

### Benefits of reading

- Increases vocabulary
- Helps in learning punctuation, spelling and grammar
- Aids comprehension, such as understanding word problems in math
- Teaches life lessons, values and consequences



“Parents should set an example by regularly reading themselves,” encouraged Wilcox. In addition, parents can set aside time each night to read together as a family. “It gives children of all ages a sense of security and instills reading as a family value.”

You can find reading material for your child at little or no cost. “Many bookstores have a book specialist who knows which reading material is appropriate for your child. Ask the librarian at your school or public library for a list of popular books to keep your child engaged and eager for the next book in a series. Many churches offer libraries, too. Visit [scholastic.com](http://scholastic.com) for a list of recommended books.”

### Ways to encourage reading

- Allow children to choose books with topics they are interested in or can relate to
- Subscribe to an age-appropriate magazine with a theme like sports or nature
- Set aside 20 minutes of reading time every evening
- Create a reading space for your child with a comfy pillow and blanket
- Listen to tapes in the car

Visit [AveraChildrens.org](http://AveraChildrens.org) or [AveraStoryCenter.org](http://AveraStoryCenter.org) for more parenting tips.



## Grilled Peaches as Dessert

Recipe adapted from Bobby Flay

- **1 stick unsalted butter, at room temperature**
- **1 teaspoon cinnamon**
- **2 tablespoons granulated sugar**
- **Pinch of salt**
- **4 ripe peaches, halved and pitted**
- **Canola oil** (*to keep the fruit from sticking to the grill*)
- **Mint leaves** (*optional*)

Add the butter, cinnamon, sugar and salt into a small bowl and mix. Heat the grill to high and brush the peaches with a thin layer of oil so they do not stick to the grill. Grill the peaches until golden brown and soft all the way through. Brush the peaches with a thin layer of the butter, sugar, cinnamon and salt mixture. If you want to be really fancy, add a mint leaf.

## Available Classes

**Super Sitter Babysitting Class** (Boys and Girls, ages 10–13)  
Tuesday, June 7 • 9 a.m.–3 p.m. • \$45

**Super Sitter Babysitting Class** (Boys and Girls, ages 10–13)  
Tuesday, June 28 • 9 a.m.–3 p.m. • \$45

**Babysitter Toolkit** (Boys and Girls, ages 10–13)  
Tuesday, June 21 • 9 a.m.–noon • \$30

To register, visit [AveraChildrens.org](http://AveraChildrens.org), click “Events Calendar” and type class name in the search box.

Please note: The March class is open for registration now; summer classes open for registration on May 1, 2016.