

## ***Exercise-Induced Asthma***

***Brian LaBelle, ATS, BSU***

### **What is it?**

**Exercised-induced asthma (EIA)- is a narrowing of the airways in the lungs that is triggered by strenuous exercise. It causes shortness of breath, wheezing, coughing and other symptoms during or after exercise.**

**An estimated 300 million people worldwide suffer from asthma and strenuous exercise makes it worse for 70-90% of them.**

### **Symptoms:**

- Coughing
- Wheezing
- Shortness of breath
- Chest tightness or pain
- Fatigue during exercise
- Poorer than expected athletic performance
- Feeling out of shape even when you're in good physical shape
- Avoidance of activity (a sign primarily among young children)



**Symptoms usually begin 5 to 10 minutes after activity and can persist from anywhere between 10 and 45 minutes.**

### **Factors that Increase Risk:**

- Cold air
- Dry air
- Air pollution
- High pollen counts
- Chlorine in swimming pools
- Chemicals used with ice rink resurfacing equipment
- Respiratory infections or other lung disease
- Activities with extended periods of deep breathing, such as long-distance running, swimming or soccer

### **Preventing EIA:**

- Make sure to know who has it

- Remind them to always bring their medicine, inhalers
- Have them take medicine as prescribed by doctor before exercise.
  - **Short-acting beta agonists** are a common medication for pre exercise medication. Take 20-30 minutes before exercise and should last 2-4 hours.
- Perform a dynamic warm-up before exercise and a cool down following exercise
  - This can be as simple as walking, jogging, stretching for 5 to 10 minutes

**If onset of EIA begins:**

- Immediately suspend physical activity
- If fast acting inhaler is present have the athlete use that as prescribed by doctors
  - If condition continues or worsens transport the athlete to emergency facility
- If inhaler is not present there is a few steps that you can have the athlete follow:
  - Stop activity and sit upright
  - Take long, deep breaths- in through the nose, out through the mouth
  - Stay calm- don't tense up
  - Get away from triggers- ex. dust, dry air
    - Go indoors or where clean air is present
  - Take a hot caffeinated beverage- can help open airway

**If condition worsens seek medical attention!**