

# Comments from Comprehensive Services

May 2021

## Asthma Awareness

*May is peak season for people with asthma and allergies and a perfect time to highlight how all of us – parents, family, friends, co-workers and others – can focus on big and small ways that we can all better understand and better overcome the conditions so many need to manage.*

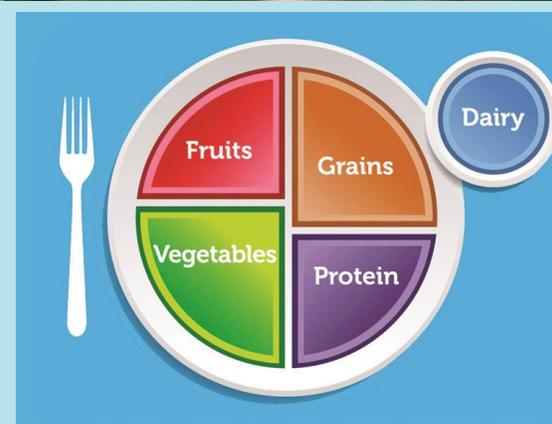
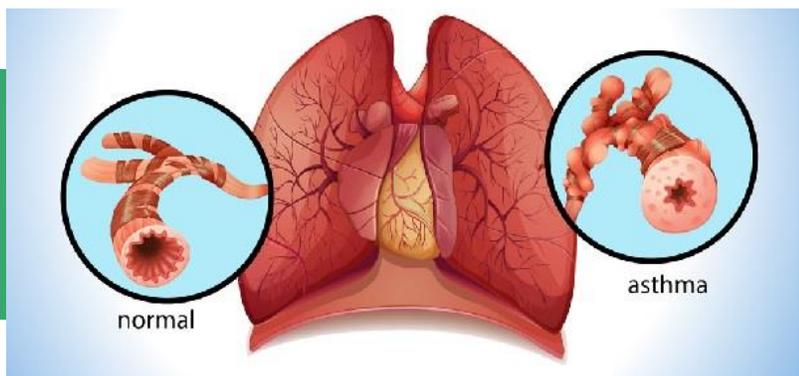
Asthma is a condition in which your airways narrow and swell and may produce extra mucus. This can make breathing difficult and trigger coughing, a whistling sound (wheezing) when breathing out and shortness of breath. For some people, asthma is a minor nuisance. For others, it can be a major problem that interferes with daily activities and may lead to a life-threatening asthma attack. Asthma can't be cured, but its symptoms can be controlled. Because asthma often changes over time, it's important to work with your/your child's doctor to track signs and symptoms and adjust treatment as needed.

For some people, asthma signs and symptoms flare up in certain situations:

- **Exercise-induced asthma**, which may be worse when the air is cold and dry
- **Occupational asthma**, triggered by workplace irritants such as chemical fumes, gases or dust
- **Allergy-induced asthma**, triggered by airborne substances, such as pollen, mold spores, cockroach waste, or particles of skin and dried saliva shed by pets (pet dander)

Signs of an asthma emergency include:

- Rapid worsening of shortness of breath or wheezing
- No improvement even after using a quick-relief inhaler
- Shortness of breath when you are doing minimal physical activity



**Fruits and vegetables are imperative in helping prevent disease and building a healthy immune system.**

**Here are some ways to add fruits and vegetables into your family's meal routine.**

1. Substitute applesauce or pumpkin when baking. This will lower the fat content of the recipe and add nutrition all at the same time. One half cup of pumpkin or applesauce can substitute for oil or butter in most quick bread or dessert recipes.
2. Sauté spinach, onion, and salsa in 1 tsp. of olive oil. Set aside. Make scrambled eggs and add the vegetables. Use a whole grain wrap and add the contents as part of a healthy breakfast.
3. Try adding fresh fruit to hot and cold cereals, cottage cheese or yogurt. Fresh blueberries taste great mixed into pancakes and muffins.
4. Visit your farmer's market and have the children help pick out local fruits and vegetables. Have them sample some of the items when you get them home. Great snack idea.
5. Make sure that you have fruits and vegetables readily available and bring them along in car rides for quick snack options.

**Get creative and enjoy all the fruits and vegetables that Florida has to offer. Remember that half of your plate, at every meal, should consist of fruits and vegetables.**

# Gestures – A Child’s First Method of Communication

## 16 gestures by 16 months

<b>9 Months</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>give (an object)</li><li>shake head</li></ul>	<b>12 Months</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>open hand point</li><li>tap (such as a picture in a book)</li></ul>	<b>15 Months</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>head nod</li><li>thumbs up</li><li>hand up (wait)</li></ul>
<b>10 Months</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>reach</li><li>raise arms (up)</li></ul>	<b>13 Months</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>clap</li><li>blow kisses</li></ul>	<b>16 Months</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>other gestures, like 'high 5'</li><li>don't know</li></ul>
<b>11 Months</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>show (an object)</li><li>wave</li></ul>	<b>14 Months</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>index finger point</li><li>'shhhhh' gesture</li></ul>	

It's important to note that the above gestures are listed because they commonly occur at the ages mentioned. They do not HAVE to occur at these ages, and sometimes kids may not use some of the gestures named. These are simply for your reference!

What is essential is that your little one is communicating with you. Gestures are critical pre-language skills because they represent symbolic communication, meaning there is INTENT behind the motion!

Communication starts developing in the first year of life and goes beyond just learning how to talk. By observing and noting early gestures, you can start to assess how your child is progressing. Research indicates that the development of gestures in children 9 to 16 months predicts language ability two years later. This is significant because preschool language skills will go on to predict academic success.

Children between 9 and 16 months should have at least two additional gestures a month, and have 16 gestures by 16 months. The chart below lists these gestures by approximate month they develop. If you have concerns regarding your child's development, please discuss your concerns with your child's pediatrician at their well child checkups.

An additional resource for parents is the Baby Navigator website.

<https://babynavigator.com/>.

By creating an account, a parent can track a child's progress, take classes, access great printable activities and more.

Source: FIRSTWORDS Project  
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Tiny Talkers, LLC



## *Mindfulness Activities for Children*

Being in an active state of awareness and presence can enhance not only our own wellbeing, but also the attunement between us and the children we care for. Mindfulness exercises are one such way we can deepen this connection. Try some of these fun activities with your child or class and enjoy the benefits of integrating mindfulness into your daily routines!

- **The Feeling Exercise.** Collect several interesting objects such as feathers, putty, stones, or anything that might be interesting to hold. Give each child an object and ask them to spend a minute just noticing what it feels like in their hand. Bring their attention to the texture, the hardness or softness, and shape. Afterwards, ask them to describe what they felt.
- **The Seeing Game.** Ask the children to spend one minute silently looking around the room. Their goal is to find things in the room that they've never noticed. Maybe there are some big things like a poster or picture, or just little details like a line in the ceiling or an interesting pattern somewhere. After the minute is up, ask the kids to share the most interesting things they noticed.
- **Ocean Breathing.** Have the children lie down or sit in a comfortable position. Ask everyone to slowly breathe in through their nose, and then out through their mouth (as if they are blowing through a straw). Point out that slow and steady breathing sounds like ocean waves, gently crashing on shore. Let the children continue breathing for one to two minutes. For an added bonus, if possible, play ocean sounds softly in the background.
- **The Five Senses Experience.** Take the children outside if the weather permits and have them lie silently in the grass. Begin to call out each of the five senses in turn (sight, smell, sound, taste, touch), and ask the children to notice everything they can with that particular sense, until you call out the next one. This exercise can also be done on walks.

