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Asthma Airways

March 2005: Volume 2, issue 1

•*The Rockford Asthma Consortium is part of the Respiratory Disease Task Force of the Rockford Health Council.*

•*The mission of the Rockford Asthma Consortium is to reduce morbidity and mortality and enhance the quality of life for people with asthma living in Winnebago, Boone, and Ogle counties.*

•*The Rockford Asthma Consortium is made up of individuals and representatives of institutions and organizations interested in asthma.*

•*For more information about the Rockford Asthma Consortium or any of its activities, please contact the Rockford Health Council at 395-5701.*

• *This newsletter is funded by a grant from the Asthma Community Collaborative Implementation Initiative of the Illinois Department of Public Health.*

Asthma Update 2005 **Managing Asthma: It's YOUR Life.** **Tuesday, May 10 • 5:30-8:30 PM** **University of Illinois College of Medicine at Rockford 1601 Parkview Avenue**

Asthma Update 2005 is **FREE**, but please register:
Contact Stuart Tousman at 226-4172 or stousman@aol.com;
or Rockford Health Council at 395-5702.

The Faces of Asthma: Speakers for *Asthma Update 2005*.

Cecelia Bristol, B.S.N.: Ms. Bristol is Director of Rockford College's Health Center. With Linda Taylor, Ms. Bristol will lead the children's program.

Mary Fisher, R.N.: Ms. Fisher is the Director of Nursing for the Rockford Public Schools and chairperson of the Asthma Consortium's schools Committee. With Ms. Krause, Ms. Fisher will discuss asthma in the schools.

Charles Frey, D.O.: Dr. Frey is a Rockford allergist. With Dr. Shoberg, Dr. Frey will discuss asthma medications for children.

Andrew Jun, M.D.: Dr. Jun is a Rockford otorhinolaryngologist (ear/nose/throat specialist). With Dr. Zeitz, he will discuss asthma, allergies, and sinusitis.

Christine Krause, APN/CNP: Ms. Krause is a pediatric nurse practitioner in the

allergy and asthma clinic at the University of Illinois College of Medicine at Rockford, and a member of the Rockford Asthma Consortium's schools committee. With Ms. Fisher, Ms. Krause will discuss asthma in the schools.

Fatima Mohiuddin, M.D.: Dr. Mohiuddin is a Rockford allergist and has been treating adults and children with asthma for more than fifteen years. Dr. Mohiuddin, with Stuart Tousman, will address asthma medications for adults and teens.

David Shoberg, M.D.: Dr. Shoberg is a local pediatric pulmonologist. Dr. Shoberg, with Dr. Frey, will discuss medications for children.

Jim Sills, R.R.T.: Mr. Sills is a respiratory therapist and chair of the Respiratory Care program at Rock Valley College. Mr. Sills will address gadgets—like peak flow

meters and spacing devices—and how to use them properly.

Linda Taylor, M.S.: Ms. Taylor is a professor of nursing at St. Anthony's School of Nursing in Rockford. With Ms. Bristol, Ms. Taylor will lead the children's program.

Stuart Tousman, Ph.D.: Dr. Tousman is a psychologist at Rockford College, a lifelong asthmatic, and chair of the education committee of the Rockford Asthma Consortium. He is also co-chairperson of *Asthma Update 2005*. With Dr. Mohiuddin, Dr. Tousman will discuss asthma medications for adults and teens.

Howard Zeitz, M.D.: Dr. Zeitz is the director of the allergy and asthma clinic at the University of Illinois College of Medicine at Rockford, and chair of the Rockford Asthma Consortium. With Dr. Jun, Dr. Zeitz will address asthma, allergies, and sinusitis.

For questions or suggestions about this publication, please contact Stuart Tousman at stousman@aol.com or Sara Powell at polyglot@core.com.

This publication is a product of the Rockford Asthma Consortium's Education Committee.

Its intent is to encourage a partnership between asthma patients and their families and health care providers; it is not intended to replace the care and advice of medical professionals.

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Rockford Asthma Consortium
c/o Rockford Health Council
1601 Parkview Ave
Rockford IL 61107

News:

Support and Education Group:

It's **your** group and exists to provide what you need in terms of asthma information and a chance to meet other people who have asthma or children with asthma. Come and join us on the **first Thursday of every month, 6:30-8:00 PM, in Swedish-American Hospital's first floor conference area.**

Thank you to Chris Swartout, respiratory therapist, who was our guest speaker for the February meeting. Chris gave us a thorough overview of some of the "gadgets" that can make living with asthma easier.

Adult Asthma Self-Management Program:

This nationally recognized program will allow you to learn about medications, symptoms and healthy lifestyles. In a small group setting you get to meet and discuss asthma issues with allergists, respiratory therapists, nurse practitioners, social workers, and other adults with asthma. This free program has been running at Rockford College for 6 years and will be offered in the summer and fall of 2005. For more details call Stuart Tousman at Rockford College (226-4172), or e-mail stousman@aol.com.

World Asthma Day is Tuesday, May 3rd. In honor of World Asthma Day, the Rockford Asthma Consortium will present **Asthma Update 2005** on Tuesday, May 10th (see the front page for details). This is an opportunity to meet other people affected by asthma and get some good information from local experts. Children aged 8 to 12 are welcome; we offer a children's program where they can learn about asthma—and have a bit of fun too. **The best part? It's free!**

Blow the Whistle on Asthma: The American Lung Association's annual three-mile walk for awareness and funding will be Saturday, May 14th at Midway Village and Museum Center. Walk individually or as part of a team. Contact the Rockford office of the ALA at 962-6412 for more information.

Respiratory Therapy: Last issue's "Face of Asthma" was respiratory therapist Jim Sills, who as chair of the Respiratory Care department at Rock Valley College heads **the only Respiratory Care program in the greater Rockford area.** For more information about the Respiratory Care program at Rock Valley, call the Allied Health Division secretary at (815) 921-3202 for a Respiratory Care Program application packet, or e-mail Jim at j.sills@rvc.cc.il.us.

**You can now find the
Rockford Asthma Consortium online!**

Go to:

www.rockfordasthmaconsortium.org

**Let us know what you think of the site
and what you'd like to see on it.**

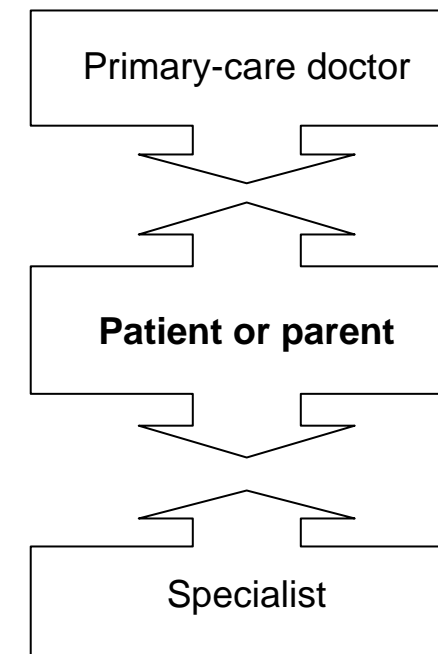
You are the only link

You've probably heard of someone or something being called the "weakest link;" in fact, it was the name of a game show.

To elaborate a bit, the phrase is a metaphor: "A chain is only as strong as its weakest link." As an asthma patient, you are often the **ONLY** link in a chain; the chain of information depends on you.

The chain of information is the communication that goes on between you and any health professional. Most of us with asthma see a specialist (like an allergist or pulmonologist), as well as a primary-care doctor (family practitioner, internist, or pediatrician). What one of these doctors says, decides, or prescribes needs to be shared with the other doctor, and often the patient (or the parent of the patient) is the one who has to do the sharing. This makes the chain of information—with a specialist at one end and a primary-care doctor at the other, or vice versa—dependent on one link, and that's the patient or parent.

The chain of information gets more complex if the patient is a child and attends school or day-care; the parent is the link not only between the specialist and the primary-care doctor, but is also the link between both doctors and the school nurse or the day-care provider.



What should you share with the other "links" in your chain?

- Any new diagnosis or change in diagnosis;
- Any medications you are taking (including prescription, over-the-counter, herbs, and other complementary and alternative medical treatments);
- Any changes to medications made by one of the other "links;"
- Any allergies that develop to anything;
- The names of the other "links" in your chain;
- Any surgeries or other procedures that have happened;
- Your asthma action plan.**

An asthma action plan is a simple, one-page list of instructions on how to manage your (or your child's) asthma. Your asthma specialist probably has one that he or

she can give you. Asthma action plans require use of a peak-flow meter, which is a simple, portable device that measures how open the airways are. It's a tube of some shape that the patient blows into; the breath moves an arrow that points to a number. The asthma specialist will help determine what number is the patient's "personal best," which is the best reading in two weeks. The personal best becomes 100%.

100%-80% of personal best is the "green" zone. There should be no symptoms in the green zone.
80%-50% of personal best is the "yellow" zone. There are probably some symptoms in this zone.
50% or less of personal best is the "red" zone. Symptoms may be severe in this zone.

An asthma action plan lists what peak-flow numbers make up each zone and what should be done in each zone. This makes it easy to determine how the patient's airways are doing and what needs to be done. An asthma action plan is an important part of managing asthma; for children in school or in day-care, asthma action plans are a way to make sure the day-care provider or school nurse knows the best way to help a child with asthma. For adults, an action plan is an easy way to help keep the links connected.