



### Asthma Education Program

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## Asthma Education Program

*Helping you breathe easy*





## The Asthma Education Program

### The Importance of Asthma Education

Educating the individual with asthma is considered to be one of the most important components of treatment. With proper education, individuals could recognize symptoms earlier and respond to changes with a predetermined action plan. NHLBI determined that making the patient an informed partner with the physician could significantly improve the management of this disease.

With the aid of an individualized Action Plan each patient is able to make decisions on treatment earlier in an episode, thus preventing a more severe episode from occurring. The partnership between the asthma patient and his/her physician improves the communication, thereby building trust and improving compliance in their treatment regime.

## The Asthma Education Program

The diagnosis of Asthma is on the rise in this country. The number of people who have more severe and fatal attacks is also increasing. This rise comes despite new and more effective medications. Due to these concerns the National Heart Lung and Blood Institute (NHLBI) began asthma research to find out why this was happening. From this research has come a better understanding of asthma and its treatment.

In response to these findings, McLaren Greater Lansing developed an Asthma Education Program, using guidelines set by the National Heart Lung and Blood Institute (NHLBI). The goal of the Asthma Education Program is to help those in the community with asthma control their disease. Asthma patients who participate in the program are taught about many aspects of their disease:

- What is Asthma?
- Medications used to treat Asthma
  - Types of medication, actions, and side effects
  - Proper use of Metered Dose Inhalers
- Triggers and how to control or eliminate them
- Peak flow monitoring
- How to respond to changes in peak flow

## Components of the Asthma Education Program

The program consists of four parts:

- During a 1-hour session, the patient is interviewed and individual needs are established. Education is started covering the above areas. If needed, a peak flow meter and/or a holding chamber are given with instructions on their use. The patient is instructed on how to keep track of their peak flow readings and their symptoms.
- Two weeks later, the patient returns and the results of their peak flow monitoring is analyzed. From these results, an individualized action plan is developed. The action plan tells the patient how to respond to changes in peak flow readings. This information helps the patient to intervene earlier in an attack, thus potentially avoiding the need to visit the Emergency Room or physician. Information covered in session one is also reviewed.

### Physician Follow-Up

A letter summarizing the individual patient's needs that were covered during the classes is sent to the referring physician. A copy of the Action Plan is also sent, thus improving communication and teamwork between patient and physician.