



# Better Asthma Control for Kids

## 1:1 BACK Asthma Triggers Detective Lesson Plan

**Topic:** Understanding what to do when asthma triggers start to affect your breathing

**Objectives:** By the end of the lesson, students will:

- Understand what an asthma trigger is
- Identify triggers that affect *their own* breathing the most
- Identify ways to manage or avoid triggers to help keep the lungs healthy
- Identify asthma triggers and describe the best ways to protect their lungs from exposure

**Teaching Aids:**

- Asthma trigger flash cards
- Detective Hat and Magnifying Glass (optional prop)
- Lungs Print-Out

**Suggestions for Use:**

- After providing basic education - Asthma Basics and Inhaler Use
- When students have frequent symptoms or unclear triggers
- During seasonal changes (spring allergies, winter illnesses, wildfire smoke),
- After an asthma flare-up, ER visit, or repeated nurse visits
- Anytime: as a confidence-building activity to increase self-awareness

**Time:** 15–25 minutes

**Grade Level:** Elementary (K–5; language and depth of material can be adjusted)

**Procedure:**

### 1. Detective Introduction (3–4 minutes)

Start by telling the student that today they are going to become an **Asthma Detective** and help find things that might worsen their breathing by triggering their asthma. Hand them the detective hat and magnifying glass, then ask them to explain what an asthma trigger is (they should know this from a previous lesson, what lesson? Insert name of



# Better Asthma Control for Kids

lesson plan). This question helps you get a frame of their current understanding of asthma triggers.

From there you can provide an explanation of a trigger, if needed:

- “A trigger is something around us that can make breathing harder for someone with asthma.”
- Triggers often bring on asthma attacks.
- Everyone’s lungs are different, so your asthma triggers may be different from your friends.
- Knowing what your triggers are is important for managing/controlling your asthma.

“Good Detectives aren’t just good at identifying triggers, they can also protect their breathing by knowing how to manage them.”

“Triggers will affect everyone differently. Some people will have reactions to only one trigger while others may react to many. For instance, some may be affected by dust while others will have no reaction to it”

## 2. Managing Triggers (5-7 minutes)

### A. How can we protect our lungs?

Hand the student a copy of the asthma lungs model.

“Our job as **Asthma Detectives** will be to protect these lungs.”

“Triggers don’t cause asthma – but they can irritate our lungs and make our asthma flare up. We need to know how to deal with different triggers”

What do you think your asthma triggers are?

### Discuss Trigger Management:

Ask the student: “What should we do if we see this trigger?” Use the Flash Cards to discuss triggers as you go.

### Smoke (campfires, wildfire)



# Better Asthma Control for Kids

- “If possible, we can move farther away from any smoke”
- “We should find an area with clean air”
- We could wear a mask.

## Dust

- “We should get help from an adult to clean the area with dust”
- “We should move away from the area”
- We could wear a mask.
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## Pets

- “We can wash our hands right after touching pets and animals and avoid touching our face until our hands are washed”
- “Keep pets out of our bedroom and bed”
- “If getting close to a pet makes us start to sneeze, what do we do?”

## Pollen / Seasonal Allergies

- “Do you notice that you have more trouble breathing, coughing, or wheezing in the spring and/or fall?”
- “Is there any medicine you take for allergies?”
- “We should wash our hands and face after playing outside.”

## Exercise

- “Does breathing feel tight during or after running?”
- “Slowing down, drinking some water, and catching your breath can help.”
- If you have trouble breathing after starting a running activity, stop the activity and use your reliever/rescue inhaler.
- If you know an activity is going to cause trouble breathing, you can use your inhaler before the running activity (soccer, basketball)

## Colds & Illness

- “Do you have more trouble breathing, coughing when you have a cold?”
- “Do you have more trouble sleeping when you have a cold?”
- “What do you do to prevent getting sick or catching a cold?”
  - Wash your hands before eating or touching your face
  - Don’t share drinks and food
  - Don’t put things into your mouth
- What do you do when you have a cold or are sick to not spread it around to your friends and family?



# Better Asthma Control for Kids

- Use a tissue to wipe your nose
- Sneeze into a tissue or into your sleeve.
- Don't cough into people's faces. Cough into your elbow.
- Don't share your drinks and food
- Stay home when you have a fever and/or don't feel good.

## **Weather (cold air, heat)**

- “Does breathing feel different on very hot or very cold days?”
- “Covering your mouth, ears, and neck in cold air can really help!”
- If it is cold outside, you can cover your mouth with a scarf”

## **B. Reinforce Managing Triggers**

“Asthma triggers can be hard to notice because the symptoms may not show up right away. When they do show up, we can take steps to prevent our asthma from affecting our breathing.”

### **3. Asthma Detective Activity (10-12 minutes)**

#### **Explain the Game:**

1. Say the name of an item
2. The student must decide if it is a trigger or not. If it is, they must raise their magnifying glass to their eye.
3. If it is a trigger, they must name one way to deal with it

### **4. Wrap-Up & Closing (3–5 minutes)**

#### **Review:**

- a. “What is an asthma trigger?”
- b. “Do triggers affect everyone the same way?”
- c. “What should you do if you notice a trigger bothering your breathing?”

#### **Key Takeaways:**

- a. Triggers are things that can bother your lungs.
- b. Knowing your triggers helps keep you safe and makes breathing easier.



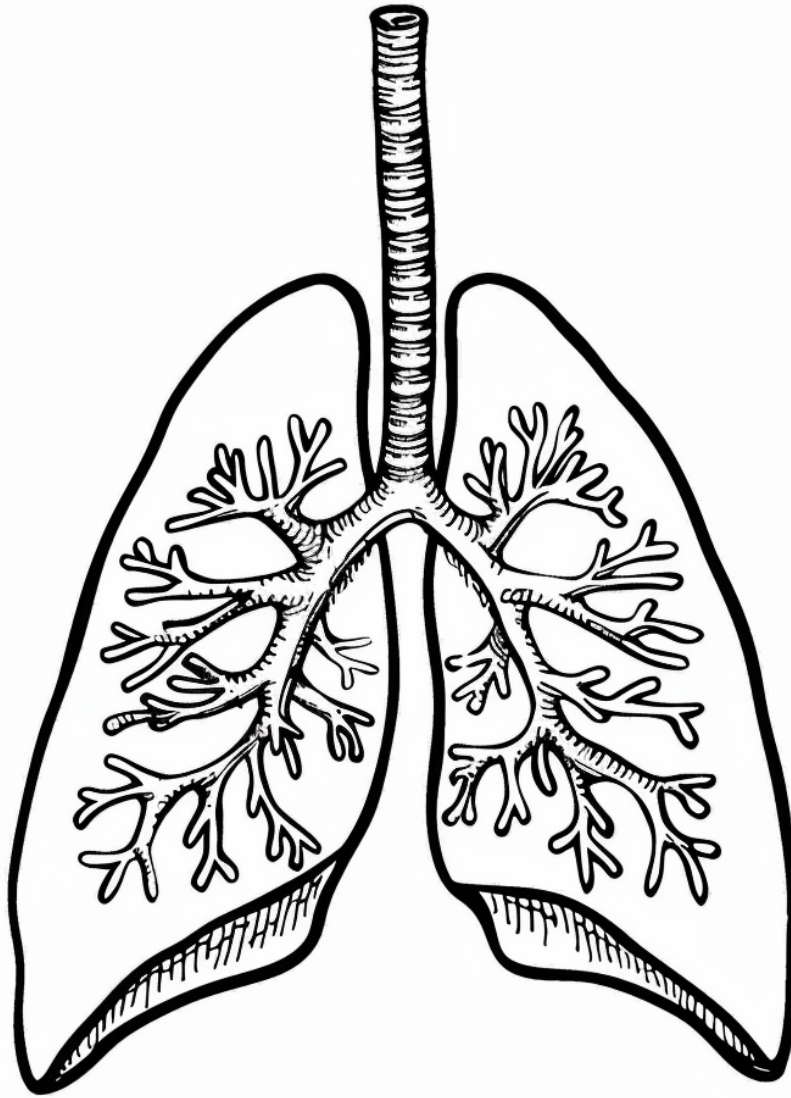
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- c. Some triggers you can stay away from.
- d. Some triggers, like exercise, you can handle with action, so taking your inhaler, starting slow or getting help from an adult

“Today you did a great job becoming an Asthma Detective”



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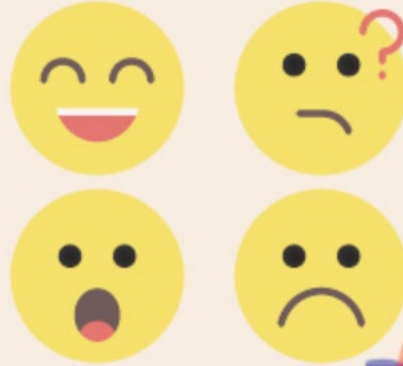


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## Pollen



## Emotions



## Weather



## Exercise





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**Dust mites**



**Wildfire**



**Cat**



**Dog**





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**Dust**



**Illness**



**Foods**



**Mold**





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## Other Animals



## Smoke



## Strong Odors

