



## Asthma Awareness Month

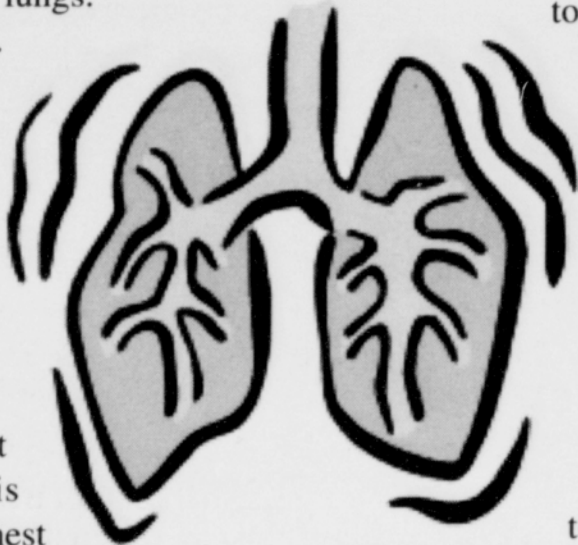
### What is asthma?

Asthma is a disease that can make it hard for you to breathe at times. Asthma affects the airways that carry the air you breathe down into your lungs. When you have asthma, your airways can get irritated and swollen. This can lead to an asthma attack.

### What is an asthma attack?

An asthma attack is a serious problem with breathing. When you have an asthma attack, it's hard to get enough air into and out of your lungs.

Your chest feels tight. You may cough and wheeze. Coughing and wheezing might wake you up at night. Often when children have an attack, they might say their necks feel tight or they have bubbles in their throat and their breathing is shallow with visible chest tightness.



tive lives while monitoring their asthma in school, sports, and after-school activities.

### Keeping Asthma Under Control

Be aware of symptoms and triggers of asthma. If prescribed medication for asthma, take daily control medicine. Try to stay away from things that are known to cause asthma attacks. If symptoms occur, use "rescue" medicine before it gets worse. **Don't put it off.** Talk to your doctor about an **asthma action plan** and how to maintain optimum lung health.

Always see a doctor if symptoms get worse.

### No. 1 Trigger of Asthma

The No. 1 trigger for asthma is smoking and secondhand smoke. The particles in the smoke get into the airways and irritate the lungs. Some ways to stop these asthma triggers are:

- Make a rule of no smoking indoors
- Wear a removable jacket while smoking outside
- Wash hands after smoking
- Don't smoke in the car
- Smoke away from doorways
- Keep woodstoves clean and tight

Talk to you doctor or medical provider about asthma and its symptoms. Online resources include <http://oregon.gov/DHS/ph/asthma/facts.shtml> and [www.epa.gov/asthma/awm.html](http://www.epa.gov/asthma/awm.html).

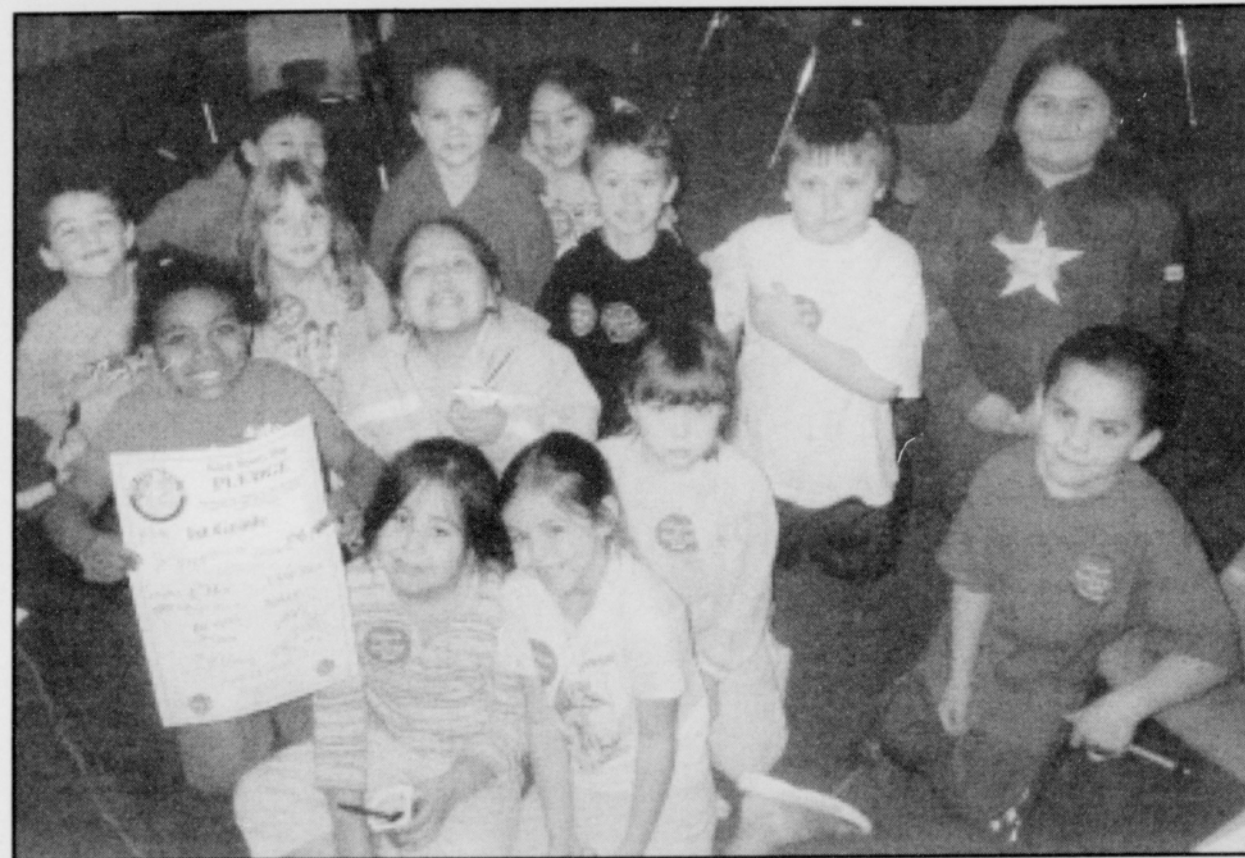
If you would like more information about quitting smoking and reducing secondhand smoke in the home, please contact DeAnna Pearl, TPEP coordinator, at 1-800-648-0448, ext. 1659, or 541-444-9659. You also can stop by her office at the Siletz Clinic.

### What causes asthma?

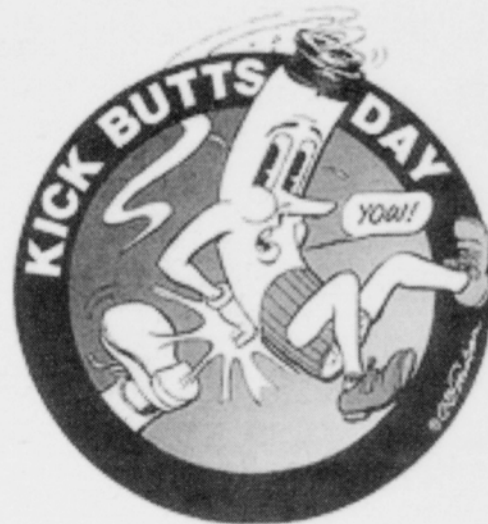
No one really knows what causes asthma. You can get asthma at any age. It has been shown, however, that children who live in homes with indoor smokers, wood stoves, and mold are more likely to develop asthma. Smoking while pregnant also can increase the risk of asthma. Once you have asthma it doesn't go away, although it may get much better at times. There is no cure for asthma, but there are ways to keep it under control.

### If you have asthma, can you still have a normal, active life?

Yes. When you keep your asthma under control, you can have a normal, active life. You can work, play, and sleep well at night. Children can lead very ac-



First-graders at Siletz Valley School join kindergarteners and second-graders in pledging to give hugs and thanks to family members who smoke outside.



Third-graders San Poil Whitehead and Jimmy Helms display their winning posters on Kick Butts Day.

## Toothtalk

by Teri (the tooth fairy) Coddington, RDH

### Denture and Partial Denture Care

Everyone knows what dentures and partials are, but some confusion remains as to how to take care of them. It's very important to keep the denture and your mouth clean.

Brush dentures and partials with a denture brush. This is a special brush with longer bristles to reach all of the nooks and crannies where bacteria love to hide. Use toothpaste, soda, denture cleaner, or any pure soap.

Never use scouring powder like Ajax or Comet. Bleach is not recommended either. Be sure to place a towel in the sink to avoid breaking the denture or partial if they should accidentally drop. Dentures and partials are made with a special hard plastic that will break.

Don't forget to brush your tongue with a regular toothbrush and toothpaste. Rinse your mouth daily with either plain warm water or a mild salt-and-warm-water rinse. This keeps your mouth clean and healthy.

At nighttime, take both dentures and partial dentures **out**. Your mouth needs some air and the gums need a rest from the constant pressure of the denture rubbing on them all day. So give your mouth a break and leave them out at night.

Be sure to soak both dentures and partials in either plain water or a denture-cleaning product (like Efferdent). Dentures and partials are made with a special hard plastic that should constantly be wet. Avoid letting them dry out.

Remember to have your mouth checked once a year by a dentist. Dentists are specially trained to check for early signs of mouth cancer.

It's wrong to think that not having teeth is a good reason not to visit the dentist! Perhaps the denture or partial will need a slight adjustment. That can usually be taken care of at the yearly checkup appointment.

Keeping your denture or partial clean is important in order to keep your breath fresh and your mouth healthy.



Natasha Williams observes the Kick Butts Day display at Siletz Valley School, including the winning posters from the third-, fourth-, and fifth-grade classes plus information from the Siletz Clinic.