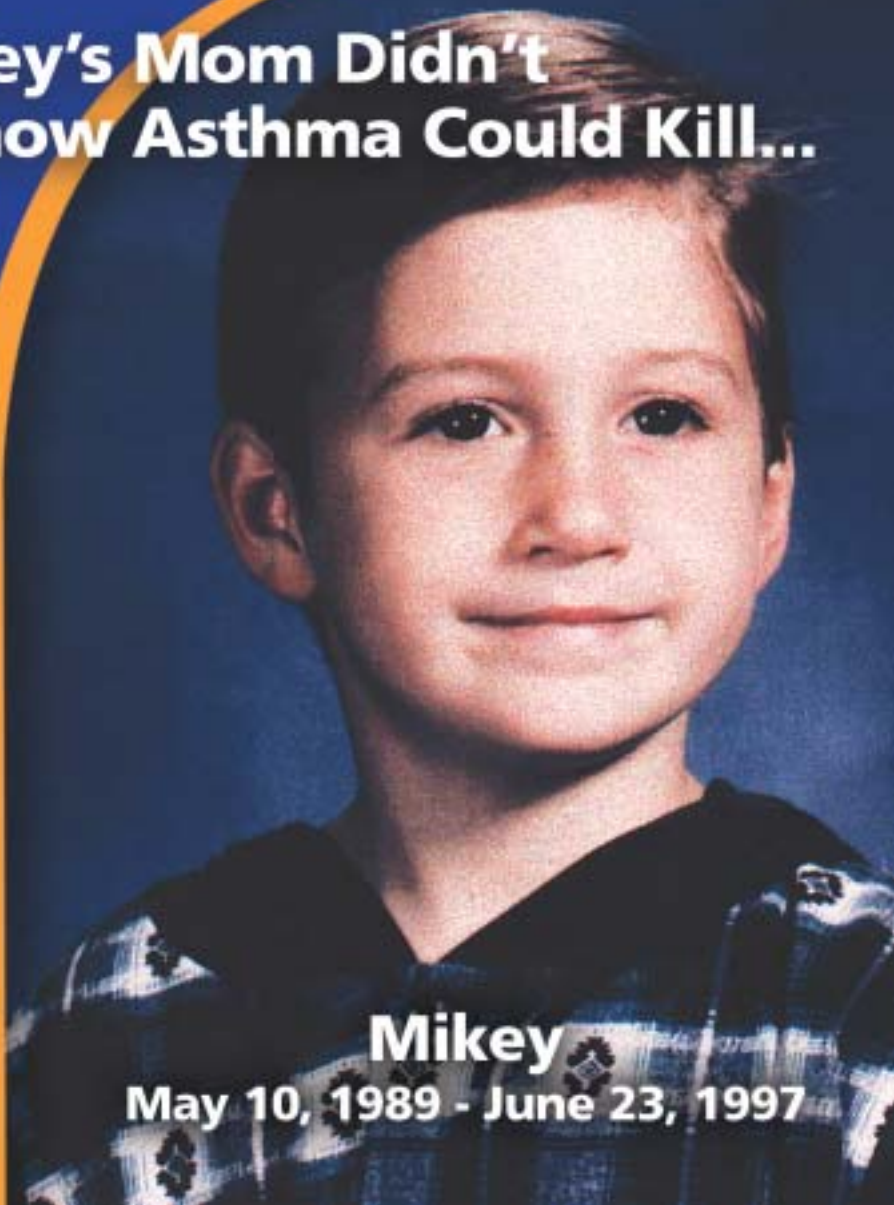




Allergy & Asthma Network

Mothers of Asthmatics

Mikey's Mom Didn't Know Asthma Could Kill...



Mikey

May 10, 1989 - June 23, 1997



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breatherville.org

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AANMA08/2005-0399-150K

I'm Mikey's Mom.

In 1997, my 8-year-old son died from an asthma attack. It could have been prevented.

We figured Mikey's asthma was a way of life. We never thought for a minute it would be a way of death.

I believed I was doing everything possible for my son's asthma, and no one told me differently.

Is mine an isolated case? Absolutely not.

More than 4,000 children and adults die from asthma each year. Like Mikey's, most of these deaths were preventable.

That's why I now serve as a volunteer Outreach Service Coordinator for Allergy & Asthma Network Mothers of Asthmatics, a nonprofit organization whose mission is the same as my own – to eliminate suffering and death due to allergies and asthma through education, advocacy and community outreach.

My work and every word in this booklet are dedicated to the memory of Mikey.

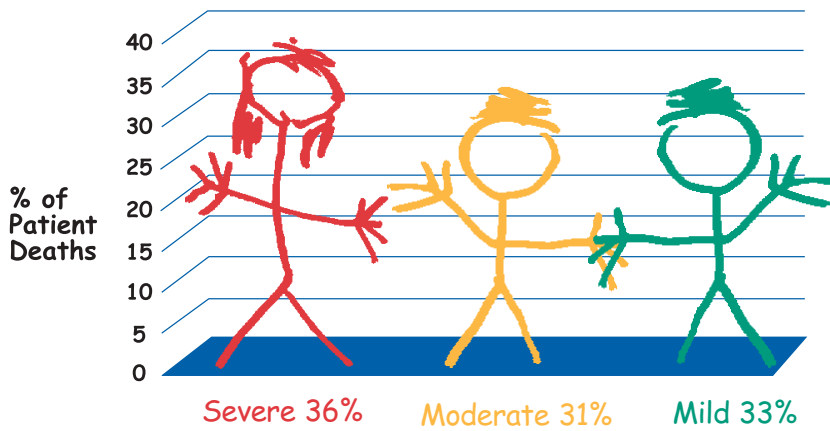
Vicki Modica

Vicki Modica
Clearwater, Florida





Asthma Severity



Source: Robertson Colin, et al. *Pediatric Pulmonology*. 1992.13:95-100.



When Mild Asthma Turns Deadly

All asthma is serious. Even in children whose asthma is diagnosed as mild, symptoms can suddenly become severe. That's why every child needs a written asthma management plan with instructions to prevent and treat asthma emergencies.

When Asthma Happens

- ✓ The lining of the airways swells.
- ✓ Cells produce too much mucus and fluid that can clog the airways.
- ✓ The muscles that surround the airways tighten.

These changes limit airflow in and out of the airways making it increasingly difficult to breathe.

Whether your child's asthma is mild, moderate or severe, all asthma is serious and if not treated correctly, may prove fatal.

Studies show that many people underestimate the seriousness or severity of asthma symptoms because they compare it to symptoms they or their child survived in the past.

Any episode of wheezing, shortness of breath, coughing or chest congestion should be treated.




Treating and Preventing Asthma Symptoms

Extensive medical research has produced effective and safe medications to relieve and prevent symptoms of asthma.

Bronchodilators: Treat the noisy symptoms of asthma such as wheezing, coughing, choking and shortness of breath. After using a bronchodilator, the airways relax and it gets easier to breathe. Your child can feel (and you will notice) the results of using this medicine within minutes. If not, seek medical care right away.

Anti-inflammatories: Treat the quiet part of asthma that you cannot see or hear happening in your child's airways – inflammation, an important cause of asthma symptoms. After using an anti-inflammatory medication, your child won't feel different and you won't see any immediate changes.

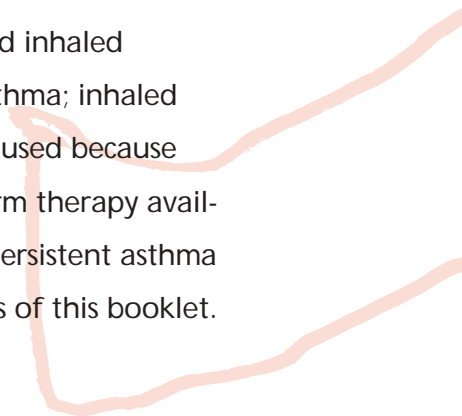



That's because it takes time for airway swelling to subside and the mucus and excess fluid to clear out of the airways. This is why your child's physician often recommends that these medications be taken every day – to prevent symptoms and attacks from occurring.

Just as daily brushing with a fluoride toothpaste protects against dental cavities, anti-inflammatory medications protect against the damaging effects of asthma symptoms caused by airway inflammation.

Using these medications as prescribed by your physician, you should notice fewer symptoms and better breathing usually within a few days.

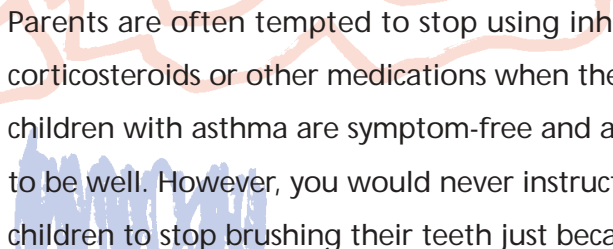
There are different types of oral and inhaled anti-inflammatory medicines for asthma; inhaled corticosteroids are the most widely used because they are the most effective long-term therapy available for mild, moderate or severe persistent asthma and therefore are the primary focus of this booklet.



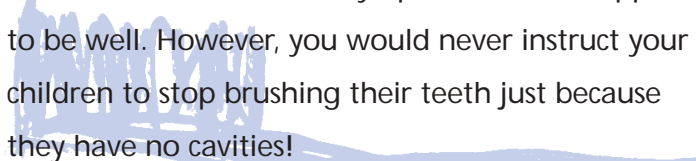



Corticosteroids are similar to cortisone produced by your own body. Cortisone is necessary for many body functions – one of which is dealing with airway inflammation. Inhaled corticosteroids treat airway inflammation when your body can't produce enough cortisone on its own.

Inhaled corticosteroids reduce and prevent fluid and excess mucus and swelling in the airways. Because it is inhaled, the medicine goes directly to the inflamed airways. Your doctor may initially prescribe a higher dose of an inhaled corticosteroid, but over time as your symptoms are under control, the dosage may decrease.



Parents are often tempted to stop using inhaled corticosteroids or other medications when their children with asthma are symptom-free and appear to be well. However, you would never instruct your children to stop brushing their teeth just because they have no cavities!





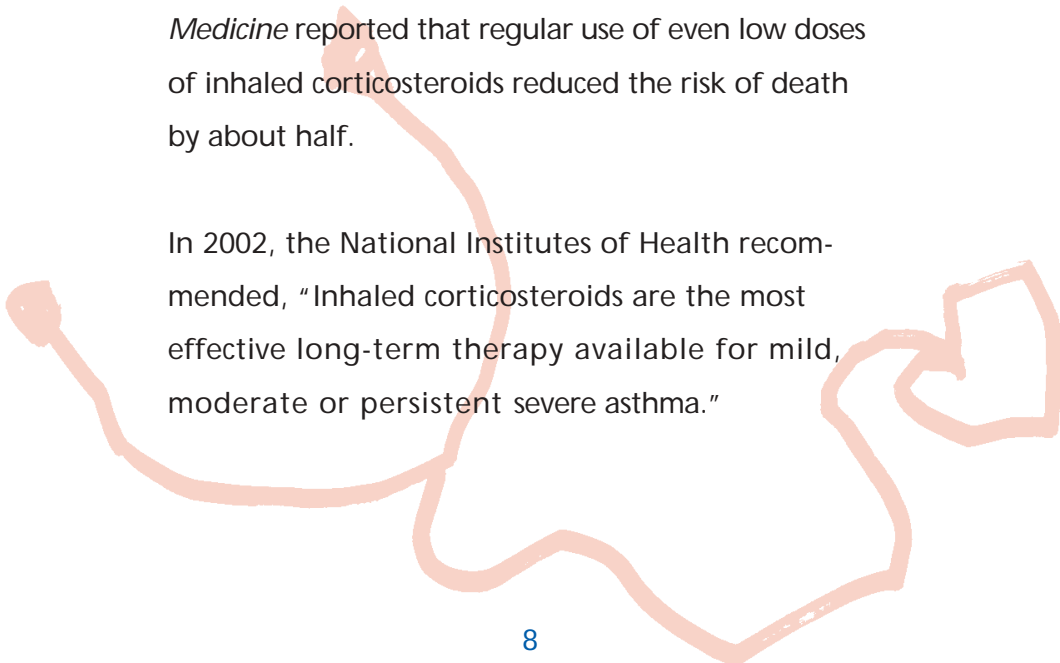
Always consult with your physician when questioning the importance of any medications used in your child's treatment plan.

Undertreated Airways

Each year, more than half a million people are admitted to hospitals due to asthma and more than 4,000 children and adults with asthma die.

But a study published in *The New England Journal of Medicine* reported that regular use of even low doses of inhaled corticosteroids reduced the risk of death by about half.

In 2002, the National Institutes of Health recommended, "Inhaled corticosteroids are the most effective long-term therapy available for mild, moderate or persistent severe asthma."




Safety of Inhaled Corticosteroids and Facts About Growth in Children

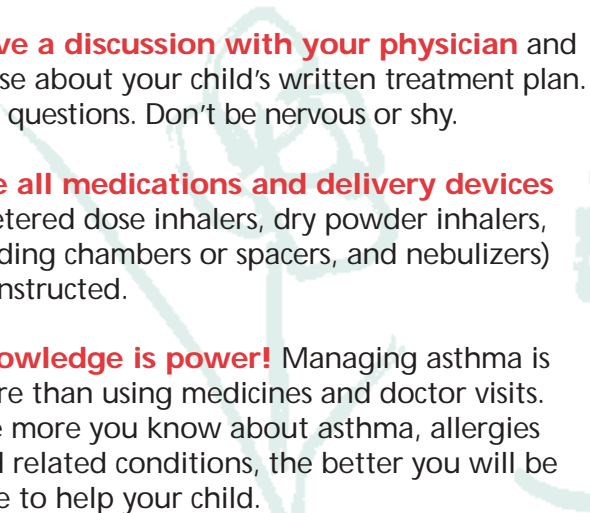
Research has suggested that inhaled and intranasal (inside the nose) corticosteroids may possibly slow the rate of growth in some children, but did not appear to impact the child's ultimate adult height.

However, two major studies appearing in *The New England Journal of Medicine* (October 2000) confirm that long-term use of an inhaled corticosteroid offers significant benefit in terms of asthma control including no long-term impact on growth.

As with any medication, discuss with your physician the benefits and possible risks of giving your child an inhaled corticosteroid. Follow instructions carefully. Never use more medication than prescribed and do not combine oral corticosteroids with inhaled corticosteroids without consultation with a physician who monitors your child's asthma and growth closely.



While research continues, you should be aware of these five things:

- 1 ★ **To stop asthma symptoms quickly**, use a short-acting bronchodilator as prescribed to relax the airways and make it easier to breathe. However, if your child needs a short-acting bronchodilator more than two times a week, it is a signal of uncontrolled underlying inflammation. Consult your physician right away.
 - 2 ★ **To stop and prevent inflammation**, use an anti-inflammatory medication. It treats the part of asthma that you cannot see and your child cannot feel. You will not notice an immediate change in symptoms, but it is working.
 - 3 ★ **Have a discussion with your physician** and nurse about your child's written treatment plan. Ask questions. Don't be nervous or shy.
 - 4 ★ **Use all medications and delivery devices** (metered dose inhalers, dry powder inhalers, holding chambers or spacers, and nebulizers) as instructed.
 - 5 ★ **Knowledge is power!** Managing asthma is more than using medicines and doctor visits. The more you know about asthma, allergies and related conditions, the better you will be able to help your child.
- 

Breathe the AANMA Difference

AANMA never forgets that it's the patient and family who matter – whether we're answering your phone calls and e-mails, meeting with federal health agencies or visiting members of Congress on your behalf.

Your membership donation helps AANMA fulfill its mission of eliminating death and suffering due to asthma, allergies and related conditions through

- **Education:** Healthcare teams help with medical details. AANMA helps with LIFE details! Our patient-friendly resources are practical and medically accurate.
- **Advocacy:** We're breaking down barriers and opening doors to safe medications, specialty care, school health care and more.
- **Outreach:** AANMA reaches new communities every year through national events, local volunteers, and our Nurse Christy and Hispanic Outreach programs.

It's what *you know* that matters.

**Support AANMA.
Call 800.878.4403 today!**

Just for You

AANMA publications are your lifeline to medical news and healthy living

- *Allergy & Asthma Today* magazine
- *The MA Report* newsletter
- E-mail news updates

AANMA offers personal answers to your asthma and allergy questions

- Nurse Christy On Call – 866.227.2934 (9 am to 4 pm Central Time)
- AANMA toll-free helpline – 800.878.4403 (English/Spanish)

**Call 800.878.4403 or visit
breatherville.org/membership
to join today!**

Count me in! Join AANMA today to start receiving *Allergy & Asthma Today* magazine, *The MA Report* newsletter and AANMA E-mail News Updates. Your donation supports education, advocacy and community outreach efforts that are part of AANMA's mission to eliminate death and suffering due to asthma and allergies.

AANMA is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt nonprofit organization. Your donation is tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

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Mothers of Asthmatics**
2751 Prosperity Avenue, Suite 150
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Asthma Wish List

I Wish:

- Asthma symptoms did not interrupt my child's (and my) sleep.
- Asthma symptoms didn't make me miss work and my child miss school.
- My child could run and exercise without coughing and wheezing.
- My child didn't have to take so many medications.
- I didn't have to take my child to the emergency room for treatments.
- My family and friends understood my child's asthma better.
- I had a written plan for taking care of my child's asthma.
- I understood more about what to do to help my child.
- I could prevent asthma symptoms from getting started.
- _____

Show your Asthma Wish List to your doctor and make your wishes come true!



2751 Prosperity Avenue, Suite 150
Fairfax, Virginia 22031

Breathe the AANMA Difference

Have you ever wished that someone understood your struggle with allergies and asthma and those unspeakable feelings of frustration, concern, fear or self-doubt? Are you looking for a reliable news source – one place to turn to for timely, accurate and family-friendly information? Are you searching for ways to help school teachers, childcare providers and family know how to help your child at home, school and play?

Allergy and Asthma Network Mothers of Asthmatics (AANMA) is your answer.

Some describe AANMA as a support group that arrives in the mailbox; others call AANMA a blessing. Perhaps that's because AANMA's staff is made up of people just like you. AANMA understands. AANMA cares.

Join today!

Call 800.878.4403

Visit breatherville.org