

Asthma not going to stop 9-year-old

Written by Holyoke Enterprise

Editor's Note: This is the 3rd in a series of articles on asthma. This series is part of an asthma awareness project network in eastern Colorado being done by the High Plains Research Community Advisory Council.

By Linda Zittleman, High Plains Research Network

Nine-year-old Israel hasn't had asthma for a very long time, but he has quickly learned his current "asthma action plan." During this past year, Israel Ruybal would come home from school and tell his mother, Tinisha Ruybal, that he felt dizzy when running and playing at school.

Ruybal explains, "He couldn't catch his breath. At night, he had trouble breathing and would cough frequently. He also struggles with windy days. The dust in the air really affects his breathing."

At a doctor's office visit, Ruybal mentioned these symptoms to their physician's assistant, Judy Sudmeier. And she's glad she did. With the help of a spirometry test, Israel was diagnosed with asthma. Asthma is the inflammation and narrowing of the airways, often triggered by physical activity or pollutants such as dust and smoke.

Spirometry is an easy test that measures how a person's lungs are functioning. It is used to help diagnose asthma and tracks lung function over time. Patients who seek care at the Family Practice of Holyoke can get spirometry testing done as part of the Asthma Toolkits program.

Israel's asthma action plan is to take his rescue inhaler with him every day to school. He knows that he needs to use it whenever he feels an asthma attack coming on. This has helped Israel remain active and engaged.

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Sudmeier also gave Israel and his mother an Asthma Toolkit, which is free and includes a peak flow meter, asthma action plan, symptoms diary and educational materials on asthma. Ruybal says Israel has fun with the peak flow meter, which measures how air flows from a person's lungs in one fast blow. He can easily tell how his lungs are doing on a daily basis using the color-coded meter.

Ruybal thinks the Asthma Toolkit has been very helpful. "I think it's cool. I really like it. It would be good for everyone who has asthma to have a Toolkit," she said.

If you or your child have asthma or asthma symptoms, talk to your doctor and get your free Asthma Toolkit today.