

Asthma Ribbon

Girl Scouts for All Appreciation Series Patch Program Ribbon 2

Purpose: To increase knowledge and understanding of people who live with asthma.

- Girl Scout Daisies, Brownies, and Juniors must complete one activity.
- Girl Scout Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors must complete two activities.

Daisies, Brownies, and Juniors

1. Explore Breathing. Find a picture of the respiratory system in a book or on the Internet that includes the important parts of the body involved in helping us breathe. Air comes into the nose, down into the throat, and moves down the breathing tubes to your lungs. Girls can trace the way air moves through the respiratory system.

Ask the girls what they would do if someone they knew had trouble breathing. Practice an action plan: Have the person sit down and stay calm; tell a grown-up. If no grown-up is available, call 911. Practice dialing 911 on a play telephone, and go over what the girls should say when they call.

Materials Needed: Picture of the respiratory system, Play telephone, Crayons

2. Bubble Breathing: Ask girls to practice deep breathing by blowing bubbles or blowing paper off of the end of a straw. This is easy for most girls. When someone has asthma, though, it can be hard to breathe and blow bubbles or paper off of a straw. Have the girls pinch the straw and try to draw air through it. Explain that this is how it feels when you have an asthma episode

Materials Needed: Bubbles, Straws

Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors

1. Be a Detective! Asthma and allergy triggers in our environment can make your breathing difficult. Be a detective and look for things in your school or home or even where your troop meets that could affect how you breathe (examples: dust, furry pets, cigarette smoke, pollen, hair spray, perfume, craft supplies, pollution, mold, garbage, cleaning supplies, certain foods, chalk dust, and strong smells such as nail polish).

Talk about changes that happen in the breathing tubes when someone is having an asthma episode. To demonstrate how the breathing tubes become tight, the leader can have girls wrap a rubber band around their fingers

several times. Girls can use this as an example in discussing how it feels when breathing is difficult. See the diagram on this page. The lung on the left shows normal air movement. The lung on the right shows how the breathing tubes become narrow and tight during an asthma episode.

Materials Needed: Bingo Markers, Rubber bands

2. Healthy Choices: NOTE: Leader will discuss the following:

- All girls will benefit from healthy choices. Cigarette smoking is an unhealthy choice. What would you do if a friend offered you a cigarette? Discuss and role-play ways that you could handle this situation. The leader will explain that if you have asthma, cigarette smoking can make it worse.
- Exercise is a healthy choice and keeps your body fit. It is important for girls with asthma to exercise, too. Stretching is an example of a warm-up exercise. Girls should warm up before exercise and cool down after exercise. Help the girls do stretching exercises: toe touches, arm circles, neck stretches, etc.

*The Girl Scouts for All Appreciation Series Patch Program must be completed first.

*Special thanks to GSUSA and The American Lung Association for their "Helping Girls Breathe Easier" Publication.

- Belly breathing can help you stay calm and relaxed and is easy for most girls. When a girl has an asthma episode, it can be hard to breathe. Belly breathing can help them to relax. There are three easy steps:
 1. First, breathe in through your nose and then blow the air slowly out of your mouth.
 2. Next, place your hands on your belly. When you breathe in, your belly should get big like a balloon. When you breathe out, it should get small.
 3. Then, put the two steps together: Air goes in through your nose as your belly gets bigger, bigger, bigger. Now, the air goes out through your mouth and your belly gets smaller and smaller.
- 3. Be Creative:** Do two (2) of these activities:
 - Volunteer at the local Asthma Coalition or American Lung Association (Health Fairs, Asthma Walk, or other community events).
 - Design a game for a younger troop, showing healthy choices. See www.puzzlemaker.com for ideas.
- Create a poster of ways to help people with asthma.
- Find out if any elementary schools in your area offer the American Lung Association's Open Airways for Schools®, which teaches kids about asthma. (Contact the school nurse to ask how you can help.)
- Write an article in your school newspaper or Girl Scout newsletter about making a difference.
- Make a kit for babysitting. Include a card for important phone numbers, puzzles, coloring books, health-related books, books about asthma.
- Make a children's book about asthma based on what they learned.
- 4. Advocacy.** Girls will discuss the effects smoking has on their lives and how they deal with family and friends who smoke. Solicit educational materials from any of the resources listed on the Resource Page. Using the materials you have collected, have an "Asthma Awareness Day" for your group. Support your local Asthma Coalition or American Lung Association by participating in one of their yearly events. This can include health fairs, an asthma walk, or help in an elementary school using the American Lung Association's
- Open Airways for Schools® program.
- 5. Be Creative:** Do three (3) of these activities:
 - Volunteer at the local Asthma Coalition or American Lung Association (Health Fairs, Asthma Walk, or other community events).
 - Design a game for a younger troop, showing healthy choices. See www.puzzlemaker.com for ideas.
 - Create a poster of ways to help people with asthma.
 - Find out if any elementary schools in your area offer the American Lung Association's Open Airways for Schools®, which teaches kids about asthma. (Contact the school nurse to ask how you can help.)
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* Do a few more activities and earn the "Asthma Awareness Patch":
<http://www.asthmacommunitynetwork.org/node/15300>.