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MANY COACHES NOT PREPARED TO HANDLE ASTHMA ATTACKS

Free on-line course can protect students, coaches and school administrator.

From time to time most athletes experience a shortness of breath or mild coughing. But what if those symptoms aren't from playing too hard? They could be the warning signs of an asthma attack that most coaches aren't trained to handle.

"Asthma causes 15 deaths a day in the US," says Maureen Damitz, Senior Director/Programs, Respiratory Health Association of Metropolitan Chicago, "Yet 60% of Chicago area coaches and physical education teachers have no asthma response training."

"Our free, internet-based course can help schools protect their students and themselves," she continued.

Respiratory Health Association is offering a free, 20-minute on-line course entitled, "Winning With Asthma" to educate coaches about asthma, the leading cause of school absences.

Asthma is a lung condition that affects the airways, often making breathing difficult. Pollen, air pollution, cigarette smoke, and animal dander typically trigger attacks but lengthy physical exertion without rest can also trigger attacks. Cold weather can be a factor, too. Athletes who breathe through their mouth during exercise, bring cold dry air into their lower airways without being adequately warmed and humidified by the nose, thereby triggering an asthma attack

Chicago ranks near the top in terms of national asthma deaths, emergency room visits and hospitalization. Although most asthma cases are not life-threatening, 247 Illinois deaths were reported from asthma in 2002.

Coaches can learn more for free by visiting www.winningwithasthma.org. The project is underwritten in part by the Chicago Asthma Consortium.

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Leader Since 1906

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