

Charday Eury

ASTHMA



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My name is Charday Eury. I am the single mom of five beautiful children growing up in the busy District of Columbia. My son, Haven, is a 10-year-old well-mannered boy with severe asthma. Haven first presented with asthma-like symptoms at about five to six months of age. At eight months old he was officially diagnosed with asthma. From that moment, our lives changed drastically.

Haven and I would go to the emergency room or primary care doctor for sick visits at least once a week, sometimes more than that. At this point I had become the unemployed, welfare benefit recipient, college dropout that I had promised myself never to be! I went through a short bout of depression before being referred to the Asthma IMPACT DC Clinic at Children's National Medical Center.

It was there where I would learn about my son's triggers and how to properly clean his inhalers. I learned how and when to give him a controller medication versus a rescue medication. His asthma symptoms would improve and then come back with a vengeance every time.

Sadly, today, Haven's asthma is still a huge problem! This time around it's his schooling and social life that are being affected by the constant inflammation in his lungs. I've watched asthma steal my son's dreams twice this year. Once was when he earned his first "F," and the second time was when he wasn't cleared to play sports.

It's heartbreaking when you're a parent and the hurt that your child suffers is out of your control. Asthma not only affects my son's way of breathing, it affects his mental and physical health!

I hope that someday researchers will come up with a better way to control asthma, to lessen the side effects of medication, and better manage the condition itself. I hope that someday children with asthma will be able to enjoy their childhoods without any restrictions.

I'm hoping my son lives to see this day happen.

ASTHMA



Asthma is a chronic disease that affects the airways of your lungs. When you have asthma, your airways become swollen. This swelling (inflammation) causes the airways to make thick, sticky secretions called mucus. Asthma also causes the muscles in and around your airways to get very tight or constrict. This swelling, mucus, and tight muscles can make your airways narrower than normal and it becomes very hard for you to get air into and out of your lungs.

Frequent lung or sinus infections can cause asthma. Irritants that can also cause asthma are:

- Exhaust fumes from cars, buses, trucks etc.
- Chemicals like garden sprays
- Molds and dust
- Strong odors from paint, perfumes, colognes, hair spray, deodorants, and cleaning products
- Tobacco smoke from cigarettes, pipes, or cigars
- Temperature or weather changes
- Stress or exercise
- Medications, including aspirin and beta-blockers (heart or blood pressure medicine)
- Sulfites in foods such as dried fruits, wine and beer

Learn more: ATS Patient Education Series. "What is Asthma?" New York, NY. www.thoracic.org/patients/patient-resources/resources/asthma.pdf