

2018 World Asthma Awareness Month

Date::

May 2, 2018

Taking a deep breath – something many take for granted – is difficult for those suffering from asthma. Now imagine taking a deep breath when suddenly you begin coughing, your breathing becomes labored, your chest starts to feel tense, and the muscles in your airway tighten, constricting your airways. This is how many people feel when they are experiencing an asthma attack. In fact, according to the CDC, asthma affects over 24 million people living in the United States, over 6 million of whom are children. Sixty percent of people living with asthma experience limitations in their physical activity or miss days at school or work, contributing to the \$56 billion asthma is estimated to cost the nation.

World Asthma Day on May 1 kicked off a month focused on helping increase the awareness of this disease affecting millions of people. People with asthma, organizations dedicated to advancing asthma research, and educators are encouraged to participate in bringing awareness to the issue with the goal of improving the lives of asthma sufferers. The objective is to educate the public by shedding light on the disease, educating and encouraging those suffering from asthma, raising awareness of the health consequences linked to asthma, and highlight the personal and financial costs of the disease.

The Asthma and Airway Disease Research Center is an interdisciplinary Center of Excellence at the University of Arizona dedicated to research, clinical care, medical education and community service in both adult and pediatric pulmonary medicine. The Asthma and Airway Disease Research Center is a part of AsthmaNet while also being one of only 19 centers in the United States designated as an Airway Clinical Research Center by the American Lung Association, which will also be participating in World Asthma Day.

The Asthma and Airway Disease Research Center leads the field of asthma and other lung-related diseases research. In fact, principal investigators Dr. Fernando Martinez and Dr. Wayne Morgan are currently conducting the Oral Bacterial Extract (ORBEX) Study, which is a three-year study involving 926 children nationwide, 98 of whom will be enrolled here in Arizona. The goal of the study is to examine if the once daily capsule Broncho-Vaxom can help prevent or delay young children from developing wheezing or asthmalike symptoms. Broncho-Vaxom has already been used by 43 million children in countries all over the world.

The Asthma and Airway Disease Research Center is dedicated to advancing asthma research. Dr. Stefano Guerra received a \$3.6 million, five-year grant from the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease to study the protein CC16, a biomarker of injury to the epithelial cells that line the lungs. It is believed to be a protective mediator in the airway inflammatory process.

Along with advancing asthma research, our investigators are making groundbreaking changes to state legislation. Dr. Lynn Gerald partnered with the American Lung Association and proposed a bill to Congress that allows schools to stock inhalers for students to be used in distress and administered by trained personnel. Dr. Lynn Gerald and her team conducted a pilot program of stock inhalers at Sunnyside Unified School District which resulted in a 20% decrease in 911 calls and a 40% reduction in EMS transports needed for children suffering an asthma attack. The bill became law in July of 2017.

The Asthma and Airway Disease Research Center is participating in Asthma Awareness Month throughout the month of May, and joins the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the U.S Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the Global Initiative for Asthma (GINA) in encouraging people with asthma to learn more about how to control their disease, prevent acute asthma episodes, and continue to advance research. We encourage everyone to get involved.

This these for this year's World Asthma Day was "Never too early, never too late. It's always the right time to address airway disease."

It's time to control asthma in Arizona and throughout the world. To learn more about asthma control and management, visit the CDC website at www.cdc.gov/asthma [1]. To learn how to raise awareness about asthma, visit GINA at www.ginasthma.org [2] and use the CDC's Online Asthma Awareness Toolkit, at https://www.cdc.gov/asthma/world_asthma_day.htm [3]. For air quality information, visit EPA AirNow at www.enviroflash.info [4]. Learn more about the Asthma and Airway Disease Research Center by visiting <https://lungresearch.arizona.edu/> [5].

Links:

- [ORBEX Study](#) [6]
- [Advancing Research article](#) [7]
- [CDC Asthma Awareness website](#) [8]

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