Pediatric Pulmonologist

A pediatric pulmonologist is a doctor who works with children with breathing problems. Young patients with asthma may see a pulmonologist to diagnose their disease and prescribe a treatment plan that will help them to live symptom-free lives.

Career Path

In addition to completing high school, college and medical school, a pulmonologist must complete a special training period called "residency" to practice diagnosing and treating lung conditions. This training period can last up to seven years! Becoming a doctor is hard work, but most doctors will tell you it's worth it!

Children who are having trouble breathing will meet with a pulmonologist to find out what's causing the problem. During the examination, the doctor will listen to the patient's lungs and heart with a stethoscope and look into the patient's mouth and nose. The doctor may also order several tests including a lung function test, blood count and allergy testing. The doctor can learn from these tests whether the patient really has asthma or some other lung condition. After a diagnosis is made, the patient will be given a treatment plan that will keep the lungs clear and working properly.

Technology Spotlight

Many patients with asthma usually are told to use a device called a "peak flow meter" every day. This device will tell them how their asthma is responding to their treatment plan. The peak flow meter shows the patient how much air their lungs can exhale in one breath. A good reading means the lungs are working well. A reading that is lower than average shows an increased risk of an asthma attack. Most kids find the meters very easy to use. You could make your own model of a peak flow meter with a straw and a tall glass of chocolate milk! Just follow the instructions below:

1. **Pour about 1 inch of chocolate milk into a tall glass.**
2. **Put a clean drinking straw into the glass.**
3. **Take a deep breath and blow all your air into the straw as hard and as fast as you can.**
4. **Using a ruler, measure how high the milk bubbles reach on the side of the glass. Record this on a piece of paper.**
5. **If you want to try again, just wipe off the inside of the glass with a clean paper towel and blow again.**
6. **If you try this every day, you may notice that some days, such as when you have a cold or a cough, you may not be able to blow as hard. This is how kids with asthma feel when their asthma is acting up.**

Peak Flow Meter