

# I CAN!

## calendar of events:

Date	Event	Venue	Remarks
March 2010	"I CAN!" Public Symposium	TBC	
June 2010	"I CAN!" Sports Event	TBC	

\* Details of the events are correct at the time of print.

Please look out for more information through this channel or [www.ican.com.sg](http://www.ican.com.sg) nearer the event date.  
# For more details or registration, pls call 6772 5566, fax 6772 4453 or email: [enquiry@ican.com.sg](mailto:enquiry@ican.com.sg)

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"I want treatment that provides immediate relief."



"I am concerned about taking too much medication when I am well."

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<sup>1</sup> Patridge MR et al., BMC Pulm Med 2006;6:13

## Clarinase\*

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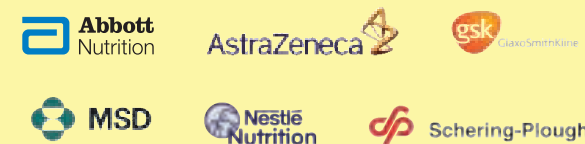
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\*MS Goa, Jan-Dec 2008 based on value sales in Singapore  
\*\*Total sales over all brands

### EDITORIAL TEAM

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Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Tel: (O) \_\_\_\_\_ (H) \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Child: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Current Milk Brand: \_\_\_\_\_

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The Children's Asthma and Allergy Network  
@ University Children's Medical Institute

# Newsletter

MICA (P)079/11/2009 | DECEMBER 09

## SPORTS AND ASTHMA



Dr Eugene Han,  
Department of Paediatrics, University Children's Medical Institute, NUH

### Introduction

Exercise is not only vital in a child's physical development; it also helps in gaining self-confidence and building social skills. Even in children with asthma, exercise and sports must be an integral part of the child's life.

When a child's asthma is not well controlled, his or her ability to exercise and participate in sports may be affected. Exercise itself, is known to trigger asthma attacks in most children with uncontrolled asthma. All this may raise parental concerns about allowing their children with asthma to take part in sporting activities.

However, with compliance to a good treatment plan, almost all children with asthma can exercise and play the sports they enjoy. The fact that more than 16% of USA Olympic athletes had or currently have asthma shows that children with asthma can even excel in sports. Therefore, the emphasis must be placed on having good asthma control rather than avoiding physical activities. Avoidance of exercise and leading a sedentary lifestyle is actually associated with an increase in asthma symptoms.

### Exercise-induced asthma (EIA)

There are some children with asthma symptoms that are specifically triggered by exercise and this is called exercise-induced asthma (EIA). EIA has the common features of asthma, like airway narrowing and inflammation, but is typified by airways that are over-sensitive to sudden cold, dry air. During exercise, people tend to mouth-breathe, which bypasses the warming and humidifying effects of the nose. The exposure of the sensitive airways to the sudden cold, dry air then triggers the symptoms of an asthma attack. Air pollutants and viral respiratory infections can also increase severity of EIA

Diagnosis of EIA is based on the suggestive history of breathing difficulty, wheezing, chest tightness and coughing within 5-20 minutes after exercise. In young children who may not be able to describe these symptoms, EIA may present as inability to keep up with peers in games and sports, leading to avoidance in physical activities. This could lead to poor self-esteem and problems with socialising.

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### HIGHLIGHTS

- 1-2 Sports and Asthma
- 1."I CAN!" Swim Event  
2. Farewell & Welcome note  
3. note from Asthma Counselor
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- 5 "I CAN!" CALENDAR OF EVENTS:

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If there are doubts, an exercise challenge spirometry may be performed. It involves measuring the airflow rate during rapid expiration before and after a child undergoes 6-8 minutes of exercise on a treadmill or bicycle. EIA is likely if there is evidence of decreased airflow that develops after exercise.

Prevention of EIA starts with proper warming-up before exercise such as stretching and jogging. This lessens chest tightness and prevents rapid change of air temperature in airways. On doctor's advice, inhaled salbutamol (*Ventolin*) may be given to the child 15 minutes before exercise. Salbutamol helps to prevent airway narrowing and can also relieve asthma symptoms if they develop. Long-acting inhalers to open airways may also be prescribed for use before school, which has effects for up to 12 hours. If symptoms are not well controlled, doctors may start preventive medicines to reduce inflammation of airways. Do note that exercise should be avoided if the child is having an attack or is feeling unwell.



### Choice of sports

The recommended sports for children with asthma are those that involve short bursts of exercise or intermittent periods of activity, as they are less likely to trigger asthma symptoms. Swimming is one such example and it also strengthens the upper body, improves fitness and encourages good breathing techniques. Other recommended sports include walking, volleyball, gymnastics, table-tennis and badminton.

Sports that involve prolonged exertion such as distance running, football or basketball are more likely to trigger asthma symptoms. Sports in cold environment such as ice hockey or ice-skating may not be tolerated as well. This does not mean that children with asthma cannot take part in these sports if they really like them. Instead, with proper physical training and good asthma control with medications, children with asthma should be able to participate in any sport they choose.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, exercise is beneficial to the child in promoting both physical health and emotional well-being. Even if not striving for an Olympic medal, almost all children with asthma should be able to exercise to their full ability with appropriate monitoring and treatment.



## “ I CAN ! ” Swim Event @ Children’s Day 2009

By: Dr Genevieve V. Llanora

Every year, children look forward to Children's day, which falls on 1 October every year. This year, what made the occasion extra special to 16 members of the children's asthma and allergy network ("I CAN!") at the University Children's Medical Institute (UCMI), NUH is that they were given the chance to spend this day with the swimmers from Team Singapore. As part of "I CAN!"'s thrust to encourage its members to participate in sports, "I CAN!", in collaboration with Glaxo SmithKline came up with this very unique event for its members. 10 swimmers of Team Singapore took their time out from their busy schedule to spend the day with the kids at the Singapore Swimming Association, Toa Payoh Swimming Complex. The team members, which included National Swimmer Rainer Ng who had childhood asthma himself, gave the children basic pointers on swimming as well as encouraged them to participate into sports. Furthermore, the swimmers emphasized that illness such as Asthma should not hinder these kids from taking part in sports activities. A/Prof. Daniel Goh, head of the Department of Paediatrics of the UCMI, and founding Chairperson of "I CAN!" also made time to join us at the afternoon swim. It was a fun-filled afternoon, where the kids had a blast making this Children's Day a very memorable and special one.



This event received coverage in Straits Times on 2 Oct 2009 and "Mind your body" on 5 November 2009.

### Farewell & Best Wishes to Ms Hor Chuen Yee!



**Chuen Yee's Message to "I CAN!" team & members:**

"Its been a wonderful journey I've had with children and parents even grandparents I've met throughout my service in NUH. It is something that I cherish and look forward to return to in pursue of my passion in nursing. Even though I have my commitments to my family now, I cherish all the smiles and laughter, tears and joy I have shared with all patients, parents and colleagues. Thank you for everything. May we meet again!"

The "I CAN!" team will like to thank Chuen Yee for her contribution & bid her a fond farewell.

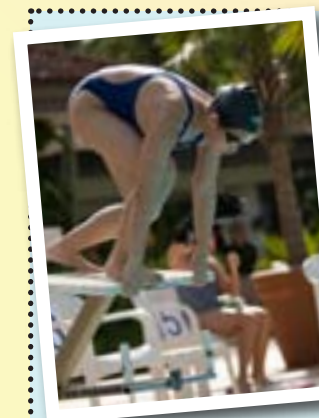


### A note from our new Asthma Counselor, Ms Rafiah Omar:

My career started in the NUH paediatric ward in 1989 and that lasted for 4 years. Fast forward 15 years and I am back! Amazing! Although that break period seems long, I not totally disconnected from nursing children with asthma and/or allergy. The unique link? My children! They have the same condition. I have therefore always been on the receiving end of care tips and advice on asthma and allergy, but now I find myself on the other side to help other children and parents like me. Thus I feel privileged to join the team whose concerns are not any different from mine; to educate and assist children and their families in managing their asthma and/or allergy and help them lead a healthy and unrestricted life through proper care, counseling and being their reliable resource person. See you around!



## “I CAN !” Members’ Corner: Sport Award Winner 2008: Athena Chua



Hi Everyone! My name is Athena Chua. I'm here today to say a BIG THANK YOU to A/Prof Lynette & team and of course, NUH for doing a good job in changing my mind set that "I" can still achieve all that a normal healthy kid can do today even though I'm asthmatic. I've managed to accomplish quite a few goals in 2008 including my junior black belt grading, survived without any asthma attack while undergoing a 1 month rigorous high altitude training in Kunming (China) participated in Singapore Youth Festival –Tap Dance competition which my school scored a Gold for. Trust me, with one's determination coupled with the care / regular asthma reviews at NUH, you can be like me - as good as GOLD!



#### What is "I CAN!"?

The Children's Asthma and Allergy Network ("I CAN!") Programme is a comprehensive integrated programme for children with asthma and/or allergies, focusing on achieving the internationally established management goals to achieve a normal, healthy and unrestricted lifestyle for all children with asthma and/or allergies.

#### What are the benefits?

- Learn more about asthma and allergies and improve your control.
- Free "I CAN!" newsletter.
- First to be updated on "I CAN!" activities - Talks, Seminars and Sports/Outdoor Activities.
- Free registration for "I CAN!" activities.
- Privileges and discounts when you present your "I CAN!" membership card" at participating shops.

#### Who can register as a member?

- Any child age 0 to 16-years-old with asthma and/or allergies

#### How to register as a member?

- Pick-up a registration form at the NUH Children's Clinic Lung Function Room 17B or www.ican.com.sg
- Registration fee is S\$15.00 for 2 years (non-refundable)
- Registration is FREE for all University Children's Medical Institute @ NUH Paediatric Asthma and Allergy Clinic patients

### MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

Yes! I want to be part of the "I CAN!" family.  Just put me on your mailing list.

#### Tell me about yourself

Title :  Mstr  Ms

Name as in Birth Certificate : \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth : \_\_\_\_\_ (Day) \_\_\_\_\_ (Mth) \_\_\_\_\_ (Year)

Birth Certificate Number : \_\_\_\_\_

Race :  Chinese  Malay  Indian  Others, (Pls specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Nationality :  Singaporean  Others, (Pls specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address (Local) : \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Address (Overseas) : \_\_\_\_\_

Diagnosis : \_\_\_\_\_

Name of your regular doctor : \_\_\_\_\_

Address of your regular doctor (if applicable) : \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Next of Kin : \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship : \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Details : \_\_\_\_\_ (Hme) \_\_\_\_\_ (Off) \_\_\_\_\_ (Mobile)

Where did you hear about "I CAN!"? : \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for joining "I CAN!"

You can either fax the application form to 6772 5433 or email to enquiry@ican.com.sg