

Risks of childhood asthma

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and seek or provide appropriate medical treatment.

What can you do to help?

Children with mild asthma should use relief medication as needed. These inhaled medications are used only when the child is having an asthma attack. Children with more severe asthma need to take medicine on a daily basis to PREVENT asthma attacks. If your child has a severe asthma attack, it is crucial to obtain a prompt medical evaluation. A severe asthma attack may require hospitalization, oxygen therapy, and intravenous medications to reverse. Making sure that your child sees a pediatrician regularly is important in decreasing the need for emergency care.

Families play a vital role in the control of asthma by helping get rid of the indoor triggers that may prompt attacks. The single most important thing a family can do to help a child with asthma is to eliminate tobacco smoke from the home. J. Persons



PHOTO: WAKE FOREST UNIVERSITY

who smoke outside of the home can even bring in residual smoke on their clothes and in their hair. Maintaining low levels of humidity in the home can reduce growth of organisms such as molds. Exposure to household pests can be reduced by maintaining a clean home environment and bedding can be covered with "allergy proof" (hypoallergenic) casings to reduce exposure to dust mites. Using unscented detergents and cleaning agents may also reduce the risk of asthma exacerbations.

Viruses, like colds and the flu, are a very common asthma triggers. If your child has asthma, MA!

Remember: Knowledge is power, but it's what you do with it that makes all the difference.

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For more information about the Maya Angelo Research Center on Minority Health, visit our website at www.wfubmc.edu/minority-health. Or, for health information call (336) 713-7578.

New Orleans is now seeking tourists

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American Library Association brought 18,000 delegates to town and garnered rave reviews from participants. However, the next big meeting is not slated until the fall.

Frommer's recently published what it claims is the first comprehensive guide to the city since Katrina. Mary Herzog, author of "Portable New Orleans," said that for the average tourist interested in areas such as the French Quarter, Central Business District and Garden District, little has changed as a result of Katrina.

In the book, she also recom-

mends Christmas as an ideal but overlooked time to visit the city, noting the mild weather, holiday displays like "Celebration in the Oaks," when lights illuminate City Park, and a grand New Year's Eve party that includes a countdown in Jackson Square.

From haunted house tours and vampire balls to the Voodoo music festival (Oct. 28-29), even Halloween is a draw for tourists to this city and its historic cemeteries. In southern Louisiana, October is also one of the best months of the year with moderate temperatures.

"The message I'm getting

from businesses over and over is we need the tourists," said Herzog, a California resident who keeps a home in New Orleans. "They want to feed them, they want to sell them stuff, they want to tell them stories. The future of the city hinges on that more than anything else."

Currently, the New Orleans metropolitan market has just under 28,000 hotel rooms — 10,000 shy of the pre-Katrina total. About 1,150 are expected to return in the fall with the opening of a hotel at the downtown casino and the reopening of the Ritz Carlton and Iberville Suites hotels,

Gray said.

"We're poised and ready to go," Gray said. "We just need to show people we can accommodate all kinds and sizes of groups."

Although many restaurants have not reopened, virtually all the "name" eateries that tourists flock to in the French Quarter and Garden District are up and running, said Tom Weatherly of the Louisiana Restaurant Association. They include Arnaud's, Antoine's, Brennan's and Bayona.

The business of hosting major sporting events—a key to future tourism—has been redeveloped quickly.

Book steers kids away from fast-food eating



THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

"Chew on This: Everything You Don't Want To Know About Fast Food." By Eric Schlosser and Charles Wilson. Houghton Mifflin, 304 Pages, \$16.

Did you know that the meat in one hamburger might have come from hundreds or even thousands of cows?

That one can of Coke contains more than 10 teaspoons of sugar?

Or that Chicken McNuggets have more fat per ounce than a hamburger?

These and other interesting — and disturbing — facts are revealed in "Chew on This."

The book by investigative journalist Eric Schlosser is similar to his best-selling and eye-opening "Fast Food Nation" (2001) but is aimed at readers 11 and older.

He and co-author Charles Wilson provide an overview of the history, development and state of fast food today. Readers learn about the industry's effect on our communities, our health and the environment, and it's not pretty.

"Chew on This" is a powerful and fascinating expose of the industry that explores the rising obesity rates and health problems associated with fast food, as well as the unsanitary, environmentally damaging and cruel practices used in its production.

The book will appeal to children's natural curiosity (and their fondness for being

grossed-out) by taking them through the raising and slaughtering of animals destined to become fast food. Kids also learn about the potential health consequences of eating the stuff through a pictorial tour of the human body that shows the damaging effects a high-fat, high-sugar diet has on the brain, heart, kidneys, liver and spine.

With their innate sense of justice and fair play still intact, kids should be outraged to learn about the treatment of workers in fast-food restaurants, the bullying tactics used on farmers and ranchers, the horrifying conditions endured by slaughterhouse workers and the senselessly cruel treatment of animals.

"Chew on This" is interesting, informative and even galvanizing, but it's also very saddening. By learning how the fast-food industry works, we get a glimpse of what we have lost — family farms and ranches, natural food and a connection to the food we eat.

The fast-food industry has almost done away with the family farm and ranch. As Schlosser tells it, conglomerates control almost every aspect of the raising and pricing of cattle and chickens to the detriment of the environment and our health, as well as to the livelihood of farmers and ranchers.

He makes the straightforward case that fast food has contributed to the homogenization of our communities. Ray Kroc, the genius behind McDonald's, was obsessed with making sure that every french fry and every hamburger was the same from one McDonald's to another. This sameness has now migrated to our towns, where highways from coast to coast are repetitive stretches adorned by the same familiar group of fast-food logos.

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