

SETTING

Suburban Clinic

CARER

You're the parent of 5-year-old Matthew. You present to your doctor as follow-up from an emergency consultation two days ago when he was newly diagnosed with asthma. For the past month, he has been waking frequently at night with coughing and has trouble breathing when running around. Last week, Matthew developed a cold with low-grade fever and two nights ago he had a severe bout of coughing, breathing difficulty and wheezing. You took him to the Emergency Department where he was treated with nebulised salbutamol and then discharged.

TASK

- You have little understanding of asthma and ask your doctor: "What is asthma? Will Matthew always have this condition?"
- You are frightened that Matthew might have a severe attack and you seek advice on how to manage Matthew's asthma.
- Can the doctor help in any other way?

SETTING

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DOCTOR

A parent presents with his/her five-year-old son, Matthew, as follow-up after an emergency consultation two days ago when Matthew was newly diagnosed with asthma. Then, Matthew experienced a severe bout of coughing, breathing difficulty and wheezing on the background of a cold with low-grade fever. The parent felt frightened so took Matthew to the hospital Emergency Department where he was treated with nebulised salbutamol.

TASK

- Find out what the patient has learnt about asthma since the hospitalisation.
- Explain asthma to the parent (narrowing of airways in lungs). Describe some of the symptoms (e.g., shortness of breath, wheezing).
- Find out what the patient wants to know in this consultation. Explain 2-3 management points (e.g., how to identify and control trigger factors; assess severity of symptoms; respond in an urgent situation; ensure school is informed and salbutamol available there).
- Reassure the parent by explaining that prognosis is good if the parent understands the triggers and knows exactly what to do in an acute situation (you will support by developing an Asthma Action Plan and arranging early review).