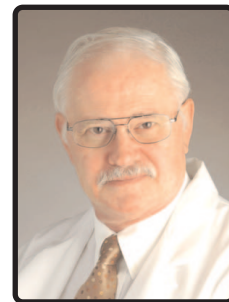


## "DOC" MONAGHAN ASTHMA EDUCATION PROGRAM

*Reviewed by Paul Mathews PhD, RRT*



About 18 million Americans have asthma and the incidence is growing every year. Six million of the 18 million are children, and in fact, asthma is one of the most common chronic diseases of childhood responsible for 14 million lost school days per year and untold anguish amongst children and parents alike.

Even though asthma cannot be cured, we all know that it can almost always be controlled and education about the disease is the best vehicle for doing just that. For this reason, Monaghan Medical, a company well-known for its innovative products and support of the profession over many decades, has chosen education, with the goal of helping patients and their families manage their childhood asthma, as one of its top priorities.

In this issue we review a new asthma education program designed for both parents and children developed by Monaghan. The program is a part of their successful Aero Bear™ educational series and is called "Doc Monaghan" by the company. It consists of several educational components in a multimedia format which, to the company's credit, takes into account different learning styles exhibited by children over their age spans. The standard packet of components in the program consists of: A Parents' Guide (60 pages), A "Story book" (64 pages), A Coloring Book with crayons (12 pages), A 12 minute video (DVD).

Right off let me say that each of the print resources listed above, as well as the DVD, contains both English and Spanish versions. For

the print media, one half of the pages are in Spanish while the other half are in English something we are increasingly seeing in instructional print media today. So, let's take a closer look at the components of Doc Monaghan starting with the coloring book.



The coloring book designed by Monaghan for this program is much more than just a coloring book. Included in its 12 pages of activities (6 in English and 6 in Spanish) are not only the standard color-between-the-lines activities but also a "trigger" identification, naming and listing games, a writing exercise, a find-the-word puzzle directed at asthma control and a word scramble activity. The structured coloring activities center on coloring in "Doc" Monaghan – the "host" of the program and coloring in pictures of an asthmatic child who is having difficulty breathing. Another picture to color in

is one of another child using an MDI with a holding chamber. The coloring book is clearly aimed at children of school age since it requires reading and printing ability. The younger child, say 4-5 years old, could be lead through the book with parental involvement but likely would be unable to complete the exercises other than the coloring.

The Parent's Guide component of the program is printed with high quality graphics in bright attention getting colors and crisp clean lettering. The graphics include excellent representations of both a normal airway and an airway narrowed by asthma. Pictures of a Peak Flow meter and an MDI are in full color and are well drawn. Throughout the booklet there are multitudes of well-designed, well-presented artwork aimed at representing various items which may act as triggers or complications in asthma. How to handle activities is also represented.

The text is surprisingly complete for a 30 page presentation (30 English / 30 Spanish) and includes 22 topic areas with significant space (5 pages) devoted to Asthma Triggers and Trigger control. The first 6 pages set the ground work for the manual covering Asthma characteristic, testing, diagnosis and classification of asthma. A 3 page generic discussion of Asthma medications and side effects is followed by a 4 page introduction to medication delivery systems. Peak Flow monitoring and tracking are covered in 4 pages which include both, a discussion on, and a sample of, a Color Zone chart for PF tracking. Social/Emotional and school related issues are covered. The final few pages consist of a checklist, summary and a fairly comprehensive list of websites and telephone numbers for additional sources of asthma information.

The writing style was clear, engaging and informative, but not overwhelming or complex. The cartoon-like clay figures representing patients, health care workers and the like, are also representative of racial and gender distribution. The readability was moderate with a Fog index of 8.5. Readability indexes indicate the grade level the reader needs to have achieved to understand the text being analyzed. For this guide a parent needs to have at least an eighth grade education using the Fog scale. Since the average adult US reading level is 8th-9th grade – the Guide is right on target.



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The child's Storybook is colorful and focuses on "Doc" Monaghan and a young boy newly diagnosed as having asthma. It covers much the same information as the parent's guide but in a more kid-friendly manner. MDIs, holding chambers and peak flow meters are illustrated and are shown with an actual human not the claymation character. This, I believe, places the reader into the realm of reality rather than into a fiction or fantasy another smart direction taken by Monaghan in this program. Application of the "Zone Chart" to daily life is clearly explained relating the effects of each zone on the activities of daily living.

The DVD/CD contains two 20 minute videos; one in Spanish and one in English. The video consists of a mix of animation featuring the "Doc" Monaghan character and a real live young boy of perhaps 6 or 7 years old. The boy has just been diagnosed with asthma and is sure that his life is "ruined." The interaction between the boy and "Doc" is educational with respect to asthma, asthma triggers, peak flow monitoring and tracking and social impacts of asthma. Additionally it is very entertaining as "Doc" is somewhat of a comical character, but one with a message. His overriding message is that "Knowledge is power".

The video integrates the "live" performance with the cartoon action extremely well. The discussion of asthma in the video closely parallels the text of the Storybook. In fact, much of the Storybook art is from the video (both of which have high quality graphics).

#### Summary

This is a well integrated multi-media asthma education packet. It has activities for all ages and provides clear and accurate information on asthma, its diagnosis, treatment and monitoring. Additionally, a great deal of attention is given to identification and control of asthma triggers. The reference list Monaghan provides is an excellent sampling of additional information and education sources such as websites and various association phone numbers.

There have been educational materials available for children patients, adolescent patients, young adult patients and their families for years, but it is obvious that a great deal of professional attention and development was invested into this program by the Monaghan corporation not to mention top-notch and probably costly production. I would say that of all the materials currently out there addressing asthma education, this program ranks as the most complete in this reviewer's opinion. I would suggest this for all parents and I recommend that all offices/clinics where asthmatic children are treated and evaluated consider it for integration into their programs.

Monaghan Corporation can be contacted by calling them at 1-800-833-9653. They also have an extensive website with more information on the Doc Monaghan program. It is located at [www.monaghanmed.com](http://www.monaghanmed.com).

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#### Hyperbaric Medicine... Continued from page 54

I am frequently amazed at how many similarities there are between diving, respiratory care and hyperbaric medicine. So let's add another field; anesthesiology. There are devices called a "rebreather" that allows a diver to carry a small oxygen cylinder and oxygen analyzer and mix the level of oxygen necessary as the dive progresses. The breathing circuit is like that of an anesthesia machine in that scrubbers remove carbon dioxide from your exhaled air.

Navy seals initially used these devices to eliminate the release of exhaled air bubbles to the surface. Surface bubbles are not good if you're trying to be undetected in a battle zone. Again special training and certification is required for using these devices. The advantage in using these is longer dive times yet as we add complexity, we add risk. These will become more popular in diving once the price tag decreases.

In summary, our normal everyday gases can display amazingly different properties under pressure. They can move from very safe to very dangerous with changes in pressure.

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