

A PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS

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Education is the best proactive activity that we, as health professionals, can invest in for the communities that we serve. By participating in career days, health fairs, and other educational programs we can raise awareness about pulmonary wellness and about our role as health care professionals. Pulmonary health education applies to all ages, from pulmonary birth disorders to end-stage COPD. Parents, children, teenagers, adults, and the elderly can benefit from learning about pulmonary disease and wellness.

In this article I'd like to concentrate on educating children and their parents, with the support of some excellent on-line resources. With the Internet being commonplace in most households and schools, it is easy to supplement an educational with Internet resources. Internet graphics and links can be incorporate into your activities and presentations. Internet graphics can really peak the interest of your audience and rivet the attention of any age group. Also there are many ready-made activity sheets and lesson plans available online to copy and download for use in your educational programs. Here are some ideas:

www.KidsHealth.org is a great place to start. You may spend some time here since the site is so large and comprehensive. It has fun games and visuals throughout the website. Its designer, The Nemours Center for Children's Health Media, is a part of The Nemours Foundation. The Nemours Foundation was created by philanthropist Alfred I. DuPont in 1936 to improve the health of children. The Foundation has a proven track record in health education for children. The content covers a wide array of topics about medical, emotional, and developmental issues of children and their families. Specific to the respiratory system they cover such topics as apnea of prematurity, asthma basics, asthma and teens, BPD, cystic fibrosis, cystic fibrosis and nutrition, managing asthma, meconium aspiration, persistent pulmonary hypertension of the newborn (PPHN), and transient tachypnea of the newborn (TTN). Sleep disorders are also included such as OSA, nightmares, sleepwalking, apnea, and reflux. The information on asthma and allergies is extensive. There are movie clips that teach such things as what happens in an asthma attack and how to use the peak flowmeter. The website is subdivided into areas for parents, for teens, and for children. From the homepage, if you enter the "Kids" section look on the vertical menu for "The Game Closet" where you can watch the movies or play "Time for Bed", among other games. Again, from the "Kids" homepage, click on "Kid's Health Problems". Here you can follow links for Allergies and Immune System, Asthma, and Sleep Disorders. The TeensHealth area addresses questions about smoking and provides photos of healthy and diseased lungs. There is a substance abuse quiz.

I am only touching on the highlights of what is contained at KidsHealth.org. Dr. Neil Izenberg, Editor-in-Chief and Founder, compares the content to be the equivalent to an 80 volume encyclopedia. The content is reviewed by physicians and medical health experts and re-reviewed on a regular basis to keep the content up-to-date. The website has received several awards including the Parents' Choice Gold Award and the Teachers' Choice Award for the Family. Educators can subscribe to an e-mail list to regularly receive a free KidsHealth in the Classroom guide that includes discussion questions, activities, and reproducible handouts that align to national standards. This may be worthwhile to subscribe to if you are doing regular educational programs. A real bonus is the site is entirely bilingual. Just click the "En Español" icon on any of the WebPages.

Innerbody at www.innerbody.com has animated lungs and a tutorial about the cardiovascular system. It also has an animation of the mouth and throat swallowing. How Stuff Works at www.howstuffworks.com uses colorful illustrations and animated models to explain "How Lungs Work" and "How Sleep Works". You can go to the main page and type "lungs" or "sleep" in the search box or carefully type the following links: <http://science.howstuffworks.com/lung.htm> and <http://science.howstuffworks.com/sleep.htm>. Also, try typing in "asthma" or any other areas of interest from the main page.

For actual photographs of lungs you can go to <http://www.quitsmokingsupport.com/lungphotos.htm>, BUT beware of the graphic nature of some of these photos. They are not appropriate for the young or faint of heart.

At http://lung.ca/children/index_kids.html, the Canadian Lung Association has created an interactive webpage for children and educators called "Inside the Human Body: The Respiratory System". You choose the grade level you want and find appropriate lung health information. There are reproducible activities to use in presentations and there are educational games to play.

This link to the Scandinavian Lung Association http://www.sk.lung.ca/content.cfm?edit_realword=klungs can be typed into your browser. Here you will find narration about the lungs with light-hearted illustrations.

These websites will give you a head start into creating some new presentations with colorful and animated features. Or perhaps it will give you some ideas for presenting educational programs that are imaginative and entertaining to your audience.

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