Technology and Asthma: How the Use of Smartphones Can Help with Asthma

In today’s world, almost everyone has a cell phone. They’re used to call family, text friends, and manage social media. Since smart phones are so accessible, researchers are developing applications that can help asthmatics manage medications or help learn more about asthma.

In 2015, Apple developed an app called “ResearchKit”, which was used in a study at Mount Sinai hospital in New York. Since the app’s launch, nearly 50,000 people downloaded the app and 7,600 enrolled in a six month long asthma research study, with 85% answering at least one survey. ResearchKit offers surveys other diseases, but did not see the same success as asthma surveys. While there is easy access to these surveys through the app, there is a chance that only a certain group of people would download the app or answer the survey questions. This could mean that only younger people or people who live in urban areas are answering surveys. Older and rural asthmatics are not represented, which can cause the data to not represent all asthmatics. Additionally, Android users cannot take the surveys, leaving out a huge number of asthmatics.

Smart inhalers are also in development. Smart inhalers connect to your phone through Bluetooth technology. They can show you how much medication you are using and can also remind you when to take your medication. Smart inhalers have been shown to increase medication adherence by 59% in adults and 180% in children. Individuals who use smart inhalers also see fewer hospital visits according to recent studies. In the future, the data from your smart inhaler can be sent to your doctor to create an asthma plan based on your specific asthma triggers.

Smart phones have changed our lives, and now can help in managing medical conditions. While technology improves, asthmatics can keep track of their asthma and inform doctors about what can trigger asthma symptoms. Millions across the world can manage their asthma with the touch of a button.
Breathe Pennsylvania’s mission is to help Western Pennsylvanians breathe better and live healthier.

Our friends over at Breathe PA have events coming up this summer for those who suffer from respiratory diseases! Check out their website [here](http://www.breathepa.org/) for more information!

**Breathing in the Burgh COPD Cruise**

When: June 16\(^{th}\), 10am-2pm

Where: Gateway Clipper Fleet

Does COPD have you paddling upstream? Join us for our annual “Breathing In the 'Burgh” COPD Cruise and listen to experts talk about living better with COPD. Patients and their caregivers are welcome to attend. We will provide assistance with boarding and lunch. Registration required: Call 724.772.1750 to reserve your spot.

**Breathe Pennsylvania’s Asthma Day**

When: August 3\(^{rd}\)

Where: Kennywood

A fun day filled with asthma education and recreation for 4th through 6th graders with asthma. The event also provides parents/caregivers with the opportunity to interact with and ask questions of health care professionals. Details and registration coming soon!

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**Press Release: New FDA Drug Shows Promise for Asthma Sufferers**

The FDA recently approved drug company Sanofi’s injection drug, dupilumab, for the treatment of eczema. Dupilumab targets two proteins, IL-4 and IL-13, since they are known to cause inflammation in the body. While the drug was only approved for treating eczema, studies are in progress for use in asthma patients. With dupilumab, the hope is to stop inflammation in the lungs when an asthmatic suffers from an asthma attack, allowing them to have fewer hospital visits and fewer exacerbations. Keep checking to see if there is any update in the news about this drug in the near future!