

Open and Closed

By *publisher*

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Purpose: A home or school-based activity to engage children by constructing an airway and seeing what happens when it is blocked.

Skills: Basic understanding of the lungs, fine motor skills and recognition of changes in breathing.

What you need:

- Toilet paper tubes, or paper towel tubes cut into 6 inch pieces.
- Red colored tissue paper.
- Picture of the lungs showing the esophagus, mouth and nose.

What to do: * Use the lung picture to explain to your children that air goes into the nose and mouth, and then travels through airways, or air tubes inside the lungs. * Distribute the tubes to your children, and ask each of them to breathe through the tubes. Ask them if it is easy, or hard to breathe through the tubes. * Ask your children to stuff a little paper into the tube. Blow again. Most will be able to blow the paper out. Talk about how they had to blow harder for the paper to come out.

* Discuss how asthma triggers cause blockage in the airways just like in their cardboard tubes. Have your children breathe through the tube, and discuss how difficult it is when the airway is blocked. * Emphasize the importance of open airways, monitoring our own breathing, and telling their teacher, or the person taking care of them during the day or evening, whenever they feel that breathing is harder.

REFERENCE: Asthma Basics in chapter 1 of this handbook.

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