

Children's HEALTH

NBA Star With Asthma Tyson Chandler Teams Up With Dr. Melina Jampolis To Raise Awareness About The Importance Of Fitness In Children, Particularly Those With Asthma

(NAPSA)—NBA star Tyson Chandler of the Charlotte Bobcats was diagnosed with asthma in 2004, though it's clear that with the right management, this condition hasn't gotten in the way of his physical fitness. As an ambassador for the inaugural 2009-2010 NBA FIT/WNBA FIT Challenge, Tyson has teamed up with fitness and nutrition expert, Dr. Melina Jampolis to raise awareness about the importance of fitness for today's youth, particularly for those who have asthma and may avoid exercising.

The NBA FIT/WNBA FIT Challenge is a nationwide competition for boys and girls ages 14 and under that encourages participants to maintain active and fit lifestyles through time-based fitness courses. The NBA FIT/WNBA FIT Challenge also aims to raise awareness about asthma and proper asthma management. As part of their involvement, Tyson and Dr. Jampolis hope to motivate children and their parents to engage in an active lifestyle and if they have asthma, to discuss an appropriate plan of action with their physician.

Today, about 17 percent of children between the ages of 6 and 19 are overweight—more than double the proportion since 1980. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, children and teens need 60 minutes of activity a day for their health. These facts are important for all children, but particularly important for those who have asthma—a disease affecting over 6 million children in the United States. For up to 80 percent of asthma patients, exercise can act as a trigger for their condition, which may discourage parents from allowing their child to be active. The fact is that, when controlled, asthma should not get in the way of their child participating in exercise or physical activities.



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NBA star Tyson Chandler and fitness and nutrition expert Dr. Melina Jampolis want to raise awareness about the importance of fitness for today's youth.

Both Tyson and Dr. Jampolis want to help raise awareness among parents of children with asthma that the disease does not need to get in the way of their overall fitness. "A child should be able to engage in regular physical activity in their daily life and with the right management, asthma should not be an obstacle. Parents need to talk with their child's doctor about managing the condition so their child can enjoy an active and fit lifestyle," said Dr. Jampolis.

Tyson Chandler is living proof that, with the right management, one can enjoy an active and fit lifestyle even when diagnosed with asthma. He hopes that his personal story will help inspire people with asthma to be active. "Dr. Jampolis and I are thrilled to be talking about the importance of children's fitness, particularly for kids with asthma who may think they don't have a chance to play sports or be active," said Chandler. "Physical fitness is so important to a child's health and happiness. I hope my experience as an NBA player serves as an example of how active one can be, even

with a condition like asthma, and helps children never give up on their dreams."

There are many ways that parents can help their children have an active and fit life even when dealing with asthma:

- Create a fitness routine for your child where they can decide what kinds of exercises they enjoy and would like to participate in.
- Encourage your child to take part in organized activities and team sports as this will guarantee structured exercise in your child's life.

- Explore how much exercise your child is getting at school and make sure to count this towards their daily routine. Even an active recess or class trip can count towards fitness.

- Set up active play dates with your child's classmates so exercise can be incorporated with playtime.

- At the end of the week, evaluate the exercise that your child has accomplished and ensure that it adds up to approximately 60 minutes per day.

- Try to make fitness a family affair. Plan activities like going for a bike ride, playing tag or football in the park instead of going to the movies on weekends.

- Before starting any exercise routine or program, parents should talk to their child's doctor.

Parents of children with asthma should understand their child's condition and educate themselves on asthma control. To learn more about their child's condition, parents should speak with their child's doctor. They can also access an online asthma resource, www.ASTMMyths.com, to find out more about some of the common myths and facts about asthma. To learn more about how physical fitness can benefit children with or without asthma and for fun tips to keep families fit, visit www.nba.com/nbafit.