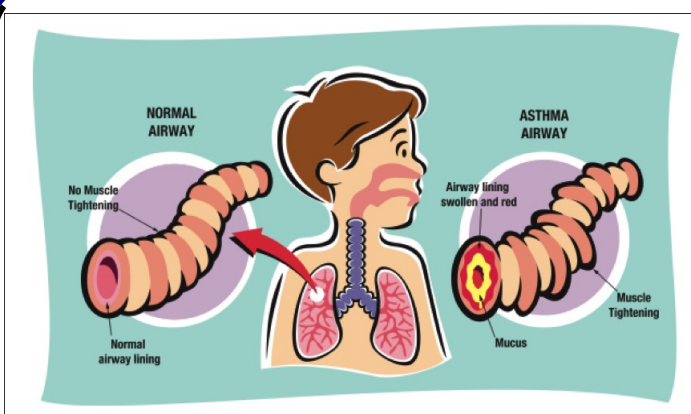




SEALS Health News

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Asthma

Childhood asthma impacts millions of children and their families. In fact, the majority of children who develop asthma do so before the age of five.

There is no cure for asthma, but once it is properly diagnosed and a treatment plan is in place you will be able to manage your condition, and your quality of life will improve.

An allergist / immunologist is the best qualified physician in diagnosing and treating asthma. With the help of your allergist, you can take control of your condition and participate in normal activities.

Asthma is a chronic disease involving the airways in the lungs. These airways, or bronchial tubes, allow air to come in and out of the lungs.

If you have asthma your airways are always inflamed. They become even more swollen and the muscles around the airways can tighten when something triggers your symptoms. This makes it difficult for air to move in and out of the lungs, causing symptoms such as coughing, wheezing, shortness of breath and/or chest tightness.

For many asthma sufferers, timing of these symptoms is closely related to physical activity. And, some otherwise healthy people can develop asthma symptoms only when exercising.

This is called exercise-induced bronchoconstriction (EIB), or exercise-induced asthma (EIA). Staying active is an important way to stay healthy, so asthma shouldn't keep you on the sidelines. Your physician can develop a management plan to keep your symptoms under control before, during and after physical activity.

People with a family history of allergies or asthma are more prone to developing asthma. Many people with asthma also have allergies. This is called allergic asthma.

Occupational asthma is caused by inhaling fumes, gases, dust or other potentially harmful substances while on the job.



Asthma is the
leading chronic disease
among U.S. children.
ONE IN 12
children have asthma.



Research shows what parents have known all along: asthma attacks requiring a hospital or ER visit start to spike in early-to-mid September and decline in mid October.

Approximately 25% of all children's asthma hospitalizations occur in September. Doctors even identified the third week of September as the peak week for asthma attacks, hospitalizations and ER visits.

10 Ways to Keep Children with Asthma Healthy During the September Asthma Peak

If the past predicts the future, then September is sure to be a challenging month for children with asthma.

Why Does the September Asthma Peak Happen?

Return to school means exposure to multiple allergens (indoor mold, animal dander) and respiratory irritants (air pollutants from idling school buses)

High levels of ragweed and mold allergens in outside air

Greater exposure to cold germs and viruses, including the flu

Irregular medication use from summer months – when children don't follow their asthma medication schedule in summer, they are more at risk for asthma flares in September when they're exposed to more allergens and triggers

Anxiety and stress associated with the new school year.

September is, in many ways, a month of transitions. It is the end of summer and the start of fall. The heat and humidity may cool off, but

ragweed is in abundance.

September is also when millions of children head off to school. And it's when flu and cold viruses tend to emerge. Many children are exposed to more risk factors that can trigger allergies and lead to an asthma attack

Common asthma triggers:

Indoor allergens –

Children start to spend more time indoors, either in school or in the home doing homework. They may be exposed to allergens, such as mold, pet dander, dust mites and cockroaches, that can cause an allergic reaction.

Outdoor allergens –

Ragweed is a potent allergen that emerges in early August and sticks around until first frost.

Irritants – Diesel exhaust from school buses can linger in the air outside the school. It can also enter classrooms through open windows.

Tobacco smoke – Cigarettes are frequent asthma triggers, whether inhaled by smoking or via secondhand smoke.

Exercise-induced asthma – Physical activity can trigger symptoms in September, especially when exercising outdoors during pollen season.

Viral respiratory infections – Cases of colds, flu and sinus infections rise in September. The COVID-19 virus and its variants are considered highly contagious. People with moderate to severe asthma are high risk for more severe complications if they are diagnosed with COVID-19.

Stress – New grades, new classrooms, new teachers and increased homework could cause increased anxiety and make asthma worse.

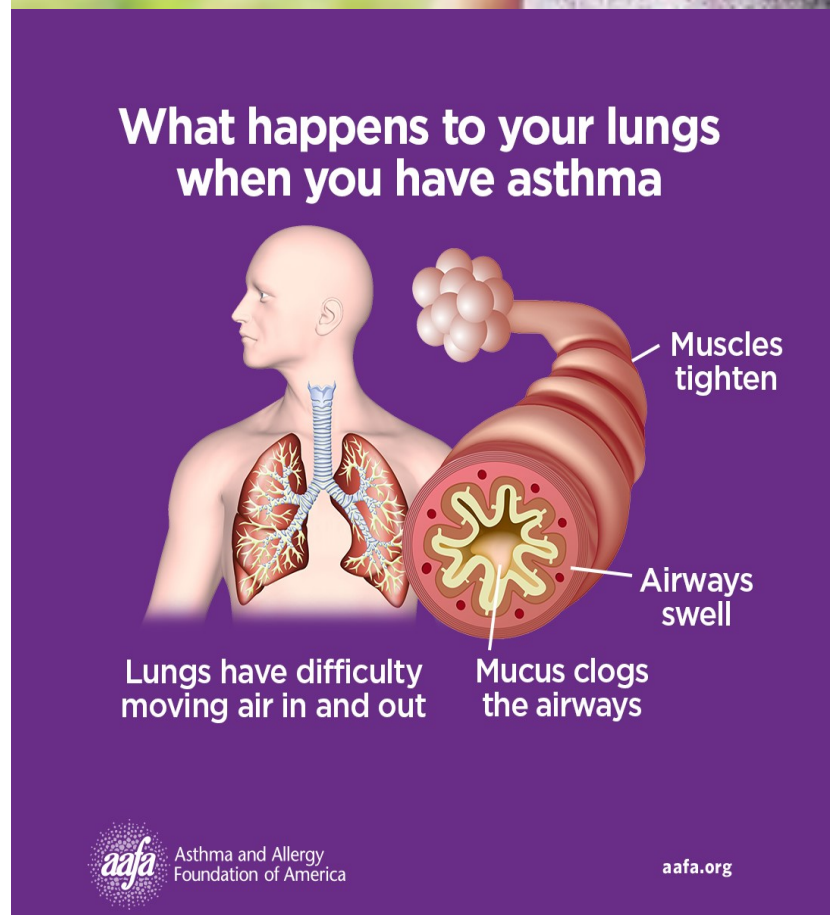
Cold air – In some parts of the United States, cold air arrives in September. Some children may experience a rise in symptoms due to cold air or sudden changes in temperature.

Strong smells – Teachers and classmates may wear scented products such as perfume, cologne or hair products. Cleaning products or air fresheners (including the plug-in kind) in classrooms may contain odors.

What are ways to keep a child healthy during the September Asthma Peak?

Preparation is the key to keeping your child healthy. Review your child's Asthma Action Plan. This is an individualized plan of prevention and treatment that lays out what to do if symptoms arise. Many schools require it be kept on file.

1. Schedule an asthma checkup with your child's doctor before the school year begins.
 2. Make sure all asthma medications are refilled prior to start of school year.
 3. Take long-acting asthma medicines as prescribed by your child's doctor.
 4. Keep or carry medications at school, particularly a quick-relief inhaler to treat asthma when symptoms suddenly worsen.
 5. Keep a peak flow meter, a device that signals brewing lung problems.
 6. Encourage frequent handwashing to reduce risk of catching a cold or a virus.
 7. Identify and avoid asthma triggers, especially if your child has allergic asthma. If pollen is a problem, talk with teachers about staying inside from outdoor activities.
 8. Get the flu and COVID-19 vaccine to prevent infections and/or severe symptoms.
 9. Follow the Asthma Action Plan and provide one to the school nurse.
- Maintain good asthma control throughout the entire year, even if symptoms are well controlled during summer.

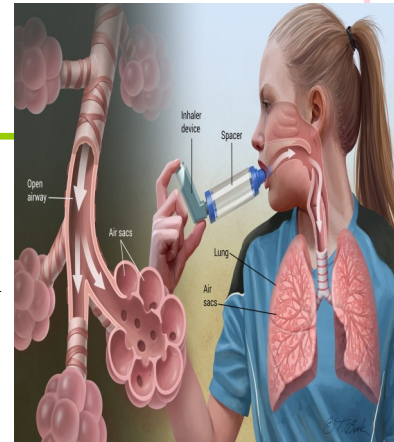


What are some ways to get a child involved in self-managing asthma to avoid flares?



Although your doctor cannot cure asthma, they can help to control it. Everyone's asthma is different, so you and your doctor need to create an asthma treatment plan just for you.

Involve children in the conversation about asthma management. Help them understand when, why and how to take medications and other ways to keep asthma under control. Review their inhaler technique periodically – ask your doctor about using a valved holding chamber, a handheld device that attaches to the inhaler and directs the medicine to the airways.



Here are some tips to boost the immune system:

Healthy lifestyle choices and basic hygiene can go a long way toward boosting your child's immune system and preventing the spread of germs at school year-round.

MAKE SURE ALL FAMILY MEMBERS GET THE FLU AND COVID-19 SHOT BEFORE SCHOOL STARTS.

It's recommended for everyone ages 6 months and older and those diagnosed with chronic disease, including asthma. Also it's recommended you get the COVID-19 vaccine.

REDUCE DAILY STRESS.

Stress can impact our ability to fight illness. Establishing daily routines and expectations can make the day less stressful. Yoga, meditation and listening to music can help. Having a close friend can help buffer effects of stress.

EXERCISE EVERY DAY.

Regular, moderate exercise – 30 minutes five times a week for adults and 60 minutes every day for children – is associated with improved lung health. It's also linked to a greater sense of well-being and promotes cardiovascular fitness.

EAT A HEALTHY DIET.

A balanced diet high in fruits, vegetables and whole grains and low in saturated fats contributes to good health and supports a healthy immune system.

GET ENOUGH SLEEP.

People who don't sleep enough have less ability to fend off colds, flu and other illnesses. Sleep needs vary individually and by age, but on average adults need 7-9 hours of sleep a night and school-age children need 9-11 hours of sleep.

ESTABLISH GOOD PERSONAL HYGIENE.

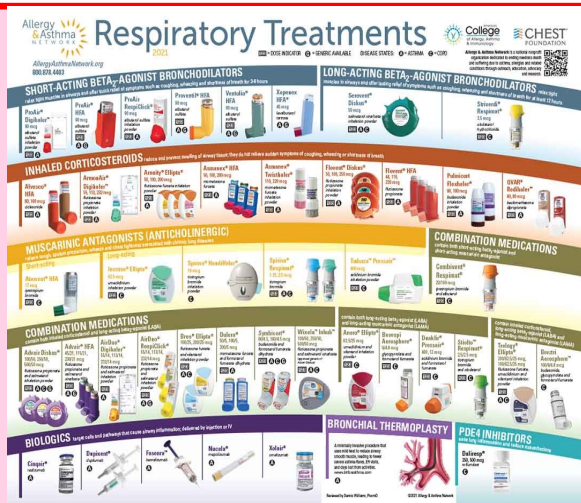
Wash hands regularly and cover your cough/sneezes with your elbow. These simple actions keep germs from spreading and protect you and those around you.

Asthma Treatment & Medication

Asthma cannot be cured. But asthma management can be achieved through effective asthma treatment. Treatment for asthma focuses on managing symptoms and preventing and treating asthma attacks. Different asthma treatments have different roles. So, it is important to understand treatments and their roles in helping with asthma control.

How is asthma treated?

Asthma medicines play a central role in the asthma management. Some medications prevent or reduce airway inflammation. Others interrupt the allergic reaction that triggers symptoms. Some relieve coughing and wheezing, making it easier to breathe.



Rules of TWO®

When is quick relief for asthma NOT ENOUGH?

DO YOU....

- Take your quick relief inhaler more than TWO TIMES A WEEK?
- Awaken at night with asthma more than TWO TIMES A MONTH?
- Do you refill your quick-relief inhaler more than TWO TIMES A YEAR?
- Use prednisone TWO or more times a year for flares of asthma?
- Measure changes in peak flow with asthma symptoms of more than TWO TIMES 10 (20%)?

If you answer "yes" to any of them, talk to your doctor.

Rules of Two is a registered trademark of Baylor Health Care System



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Information brought to you by:
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Untreated asthma
can cause
LUNG DAMAGE.



aafa.org

The goal of asthma treatment is to have you feel your best with the least amount of medicine needed to control asthma. Get to know your medications. Understand how and why they treat and soothe your lungs and airways. If you're prescribed an inhaler, ask for one with a dose counter. Learn when and how you're supposed to use your inhaler and follow your plan to better breathing.

What are common types of asthma medications?

There are four basic types of asthma medicines. They each treat a different part of your asthma:

- bronchodilators relax and open the airways to treat symptoms such as coughing, wheezing, chest tightness and shortness of breath.
- anti-inflammatory medications reduce and prevent lung inflammation.
- combination medications combine

a bronchodilator and anti-inflammatory in one device.

- leukotriene modifiers block the action of leukotrienes, chemicals involved in immune system responses.
- biologics are medications that target the specific cells and pathways that cause inflammation related to severe asthma.

How do I reduce the need for medications?

Sometimes asthma symptoms seem to come out of nowhere. Other times, you can predict them. You can make sense of the asthma rollercoaster by tracking when and how symptoms happen.

Learn the early warning signs of an asthma attack. If you know what to look for, you will notice when an asthma attack is developing. These will vary from one person to another. But it can be as simple as a tickle in the throat or chest, a sharp or sudden cough, or a feeling of extreme tiredness.

This is important because it takes less medication to stop symptoms from worsening than it does to treat a full-blown asthma flare-up. By the time you begin to cough or wheeze, your lungs are already congested and compromised.

What if I can't afford asthma medication?

Asthma medications vary in price. Some are costly, and some are inexpensive. If you are unable to afford your asthma medicines, consider these alternatives:

Shop around. Compare prices at other pharmacies or check prices at GoodRx.

Contact the manufacturer. They have compiled a list of asthma medication patient assistance programs. This will assist you in finding an affordable medication to help control your asthma.

Don't go without taking your asthma medicine as prescribed. Be sure to work together with your doctor so you find a solution.