



INSIDE:
Your child's
asthma
action plan



Lifestyles for children and teens with Asthma

Get the basics: Asthma Control 101

Managing your child's asthma is a 24/7 job. The symptoms might flare up not only at home, but also at school, sports practice or a friend's house. You may not always be there, but you can make sure your child is prepared.

Your child with asthma needs to know how to recognize a flare-up, alert an adult and use quick-relief medicine if needed. Beyond that, your child needs to understand why this is important. With the help of his or her doctor, your child can learn these critical lessons.

Work closely with your child's doctor to create a plan for controlling asthma. Then develop a routine that helps you and your child stick with the plan.

IF YOUR CHILD NEEDS TO...	YOU CAN...
Carry an inhaler at all times	Check that the inhaler is in your child's backpack. Make it the last thing you do before your child heads out the door.
Take long-term control medicine daily	Give the medicine at the same time each day. To make it easier to remember, tie it to a strong habit, such as toothbrushing in the morning.
Take more than one medicine (for example, medicine for both asthma and allergies)	<p>Make a schedule showing the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Name of each medicine > Days each one is taken > Doses > Times they're taken <p>Post the schedule in a prominent spot, such as on the refrigerator.</p>

> ACTION PLAN We've included an action plan for your child in this issue. Make sure to fill it out with your child's doctor and give a copy to your child's school.

'Tis the season — for asthma

When your kids return to school, does asthma return to your home?

Around the country, researchers have noticed that asthma attacks in children peak after classes resume. This seasonal bump in asthma may result from increased outdoor exposure to cold, wet and windy weather. Meanwhile, more time spent indoors means more exposure to asthma triggers such as tobacco smoke, dust mites, cockroaches, and cold or flu viruses.

Many kids take a break from their regular asthma drugs during the summer because they feel better, a study in the *Annals of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology* found. After cooler weather brings on an asthma attack, they have to play catch-up by resuming use of their medications.

Here are six ways to help limit your child's asthma attacks this winter:

- 1. Dress for successful breathing.** In cold climates, have children wear ski masks or wrap scarves around their mouths and noses to keep them from breathing cold air, which can initiate an attack.
- 2. Exercise new options.** When their asthma is under control,

most kids can participate in all kinds of activities. But running can bring on asthma, especially in cold weather. Indoor swimming may be the best winter exercise, as long as the pool isn't too heavily chlorinated.

- 3. Stay in control.** Ask the doctor if it's all right for your child to take a break from asthma controller medication during the summer and, if so, when to resume medication in the fall.
- 4. Get a flu shot.** Colds and the flu can trigger asthma episodes. You may not be able to prevent every cold, but kids with asthma should get a yearly flu shot. The vaccine itself won't cause an attack.
- 5. Avoid the usual suspects.** Tobacco smoke, air pollution, strong smells, aerosol sprays and paint fumes all irritate lung and upper airway tissues.
- 6. Watch that wind.** Rain may clear the air, but storms and windy days spread allergens. Encourage indoor activities when it's windy outside.

Tempted to move to a warmer climate? Don't pack the moving van yet. No climate is perfect for kids with asthma, but these simple precautions should help minimize seasonal attacks.



EVERY YEAR, ask your child's doctor about these wellness checks. Your child may need them more than once a year.

- ✓ Update your child's action plan
- ✓ Review your child's quick-relief and long-term control medicines
- ✓ Have your child take a pulmonary function test

Be sure your child has regular well-visits. During these visits, your child's doctor will make sure your child's vaccines are up to date, including flu shots. Also, check with your doctor to see if your child's pneumonia shot is up to date.





> FLU FACTS

Seasonal flu can hit children with asthma particularly hard. The influenza virus causes inflammation in the lungs and airways, triggering asthma attacks and worsening symptoms. Even if your child's asthma is mild and well-controlled, he or she is still at risk for serious complications from the flu, including pneumonia and other respiratory diseases.

Fortunately, children with asthma can take the same flu-prevention measures as everyone else to avoid infection. Children with asthma should:

- > Get a flu vaccine, preferably early in the season
- > Stay home from school if they're sick
- > Avoid contact with those who are sick
- > Wash their hands thoroughly after coughing or sneezing
- > Avoid touching their eyes, nose and mouth

It's very important that children with asthma be vaccinated against the flu. They should also be vaccinated against pneumonia, which can be a very serious — and potentially fatal — complication of the flu.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, some children ages 6 months through 8 years may require two flu vaccines. Talk with your child's pediatrician to see if two doses are needed.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS OR PREVENTION INFORMATION

If you have questions about this program, have received this information in error, would prefer not to receive further information or want to inquire about resources for members with special needs, please call:

1-800-392-4247 | TTY callers dial 711

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HEALTHY LIVING



GOOD EATING

Apple Tuna Sandwich (Servings: 3)

Sending your children to school with wholesome brown bag lunches can help them maintain a healthy weight and provide them with the nutrition they need to be energized and ready to learn. This sandwich is sweet and rich in fiber.

INGREDIENTS

- 2** 6-oz. cans unsalted tuna in water, drained
- 1** medium apple chopped
- 1** celery stalk, peeled and chopped
- 1/4** cup low-fat vanilla yogurt
- 1** teaspoon prepared mustard
- 1** teaspoon honey
- 6** slices whole-wheat bread
- 6** lettuce leaves
- 6** slices tomato

DIRECTIONS

Combine and mix the tuna, apple, celery, yogurt, mustard and honey. Spread 1/2 cup of the mixture on three bread slices.

Top each slice of bread with lettuce, tomato and remaining bread. Cut sandwiches in half.

NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION PER SERVING:

330 calories; 4 g fat; 37 g carbohydrates; 35 mg cholesterol; 370 mg sodium.



My child's asthma action plan



The colors of the traffic light will help your child determine when they need to use their asthma medicines. Take this form to your child's doctor to fill out. Then make two copies. Keep the original. Give one copy to your child's doctor and one to your child's school.

Name _____	Date of birth _____	Effective date _____	to _____
Doctor _____	Phone _____	Parent or guardian _____	Phone _____
Emergency contact _____		Phone _____	
Child is able to self-medicate <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		Doctor's signature _____	

GREEN ZONE means GO.

Your child has ALL of these:

- > Breathing is good
- > No cough or wheeze
- > Sleep through the night
- > Can work or play
- > Peak flow above:

Use these medicines every day.

Medicine	How much to take	When to take it
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

For asthma with exercise, take:

YELLOW ZONE means CAUTION.

Your child has ANY of these symptoms:

- > First sign of a cold
- > Exposure to known trigger
- > Cough
- > Mild wheeze
- > Tight chest
- > Coughing at night
- > Peak flow from: to

Continue with GREEN ZONE medicine and ADD:

Medicine	How much to take	When to take it
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

If a quick-relief or **YELLOW ZONE** medicine is needed more than two to three times a week, call your child's doctor.

RED ZONE means DANGER!

Your child's asthma is getting worse fast:

- > Medicine is not helping within 15 to 20 minutes
- > Breathing is hard and fast
- > Nose opens wide
- > Ribs show
- > Lips and/or fingernails are blue
- > Trouble walking and talking
- > Peak flow below:

Take these medicines and call your child's doctor.

Medicine	How much to take	When to take it
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Get help from a doctor now. Your doctor will want to see your child right away. **It's important.** If you can't contact your child's doctor, go directly to the emergency room. **DON'T WAIT.** Make an appointment with your child's primary care physician within two days of an ER visit or hospitalization.

My child's asthma action plan

Recognizing asthma triggers

It's important to know what can trigger your child's asthma. This can help you control the environment to minimize or eliminate those things. Here are some common asthma triggers:



Allergens: Common allergens are pollens, molds and animal dander.

Irritants: Inflamed airways are very sensitive to environmental irritants, including:

- > Air pollutants, such as tobacco smoke, wood smoke and chemicals in the air
- > Strong smells or sprays, such as perfumes, household cleaners or cooking fumes
- > Changing weather conditions, such as changes in temperature and humidity

Infections: Colds, the flu and pneumonia can trigger or aggravate asthma.

Exercise: Physical activity can trigger attacks in certain circumstances. Swimming is good because warm, moist air helps prevent attacks.

Medicines: Certain medicines, including aspirin and ibuprofen, can cause asthma attacks in some children.

Food: Some foods or food additives can trigger asthma symptoms. Foods to be careful with include dried fruit, processed potatoes, peanuts and shrimp.

If you don't know your child's triggers, try to limit exposure to one possible trigger at a time. Watch to see if your child gets better. This may show you if the trigger is a problem.



Asthma trigger checklist

Check all items that trigger your child's asthma and could make his or her symptoms worse. Talk with your child's doctor about how to best manage these triggers.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chalk | <input type="checkbox"/> Pets — animal dander |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cigarette smoke and secondhand smoke | <input type="checkbox"/> Pollen |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Colds or flu | <input type="checkbox"/> Poor air quality |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dust mites | <input type="checkbox"/> Strong odors, perfumes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Exercise | <input type="checkbox"/> Sudden temperature change |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mold | <input type="checkbox"/> Wood smoke |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pests — cockroaches | <input type="checkbox"/> Foods: _____ |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |