

**Back to School Homework:  
Prepare for the September Asthma Peak**

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For Immediate Release

As parents begin sending their children back to school, the Asthma Society of Canada is recommending they take steps to prepare for the "September Asthma Peak" - the annual peak in asthma flare-ups which sends thousands of school children and their family members to emergency departments in the weeks after school begins.

In Canada, approximately 20-25% of children's hospital admissions for asthma occur in the month of September.

"As our children get set to return to the classroom, with the excitement and anticipation of a new school year, being prepared will mean you can rest easy knowing that your child is able to safely live an active and symptom-free life," said Vanessa Foran, President & C.E.O. of the Asthma Society of Canada.

September Peak is mostly attributed to the increased exposure children have to viral infections that comes with the return to school. Viruses are one of the significant triggers for asthma symptoms in children, with more than 60% of those admitted to emergency rooms having rhinovirus (the common cold). For kids with asthma, especially uncontrolled asthma, a simple cold can lead to dangerous symptoms and unscheduled visits to the doctor and emergency room.

Other possible causes for September flare-ups include: not taking prescribed controller medication during the summer vacation; the stress of returning to school; allergic triggers at school, such as mould, dust and animal dander on classmates' clothes; and more pollution as school buses and commuters return in full force after the holidays.

90% of hospital and emergency room visits by asthma patients are avoidable with good asthma control.

However, it is possible to avoid the September Peak! Parents of kids with asthma should speak to their doctor about completing an Asthma Action Plan for their kids. The plan is individually created for each asthma patient and is proven to help better manage a child's asthma.

Help protect your child from the September Peak by making sure they have good asthma control all year round:

- Have a written Asthma Action Plan and make sure to provide a copy to your child's school.
- List and explain your child's asthma triggers and why it's important to avoid them.
- Make sure your child is taking asthma-prevention medicine as prescribed.
- Make sure your child knows how to use their puffer by themselves (if old enough), or with help.

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Ask about the school's rules about asthma medications - stress the importance of allowing your child to carry his/her medicines with themselves at all times.

Wash hands properly and frequently.

Make sure your child and family members get the seasonal flu shot every year.

The Asthma Society of Canada has resources to help you and your family best prepare for returning to school and the September Asthma Peak. Download them today:

<http://asthma.ca/adults/control/septemberPeak.php>

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