

Parent Alert!

Is your
child ready
for
back-to-school? *




Asthma.caTM
Asthma Society of Canada
Achieve Symptom-Free Asthma... We Can Help![®]

**Allergy
Asthma**
AAA
information
association

Did you know...?

There are over 20,000 hospitalizations for childhood asthma in Canada each year, many of which occur in September.

Why so many in September?

When children go back to school, they face increased exposure to viral infections which can trigger asthma symptoms. Exposure to allergens, such as ragweed, dust mites, moulds, and animal dander can also trigger asthma symptoms. When asthma symptoms are not well controlled, asthma attacks can lead to emergency room visits and hospitalizations.



Would you recognize
the symptoms of
asthma or allergies
in your child?

What is Asthma?

Asthma is a condition that affects 12% of Canadian children. It involves two processes: an inflammation of the breathing tubes to the lungs and an abnormal narrowing of the airways. Asthma attacks usually occur after exposure to allergens, viral respiratory infections (colds), irritating tobacco smoke or exercise.

What does asthma look like?

Symptoms of poor asthma control:

- Persistent cough
- Wheezing (not always present)
- Shortness of breath
- Chest tightness

Results of poor asthma control:

- Low exercise tolerance
- Using reliever puffer more than 3 times a week
- Poor quality sleep
- School absenteeism



What are allergies?

Asthma and allergies are related, but they are not the same thing. An allergy is a reaction to a substance that is usually harmless (an allergen). These substances can be inhaled, injected, swallowed or touched. Exposure to an allergen often results in irritation and swelling of the nose, eyes, lungs or skin, but other symptoms can also occur.

Types of allergic reactions are:

Rhinitis – Inflammation of the lining of the nose that leads to runny or stuffy nose, sneezing, ear blockage, itchy nose and throat. Sometimes it is referred to as hay fever.

Asthma – A common chronic condition affecting the airways of the lungs. Pollen, mould, dust mites and animal dander are common allergens that are inhaled into the lungs. It results in coughing, wheezing, shortness of breath and chest tightness.

Eczema – This usually shows up in infants as dry, itchy, red patches of skin. Also called atopic dermatitis.



Food allergies – The most common food allergens are peanuts, nuts, shellfish, fish, eggs, milk, wheat, soy and sesame. A wide variety of symptoms can occur.

Anaphylaxis – A severe allergic reaction, most often triggered by foods, medications and insect bites. It can kill if not treated immediately.

What can you do?

Get ready for September.

If you suspect your child may have asthma or allergies, you should talk to your family doctor about:

- Allergy testing by a specialist
- Inhaler technique
- An Asthma Action Plan

A good diagnosis is essential. While there is no cure for allergies and asthma, they can usually be controlled by minimizing exposure to allergens and proper use of prescribed medications.

An Asthma Action Plan is an individual strategy that can be used to manage asthma when it gets out of control. Discuss your child's Asthma Action Plan with teachers and caregivers before school begins.

Get involved! Ensure your school has policies to create a safe environment for learning, exercise and play.



To learn more about
Asthma and Allergies contact:

Asthma Society of Canada (ASC)

1-866-787-4050

www.Asthma.ca

www.Asthma-Kids.ca

**Allergy/Asthma Information
Association (AAIA)**

1-800-611-7011

www.aaia.ca