

Sara's ready... Are you?

Sara likes nothing more than to be with her friend, Kim. At school, they are together all the time. Sara and Kim are alike in many ways. One difference is that Sara has asthma. Last year, because of the September Asthma Peak, Sara had an asthma attack and went to the hospital.

This year, both Sara and Kim are prepared for the September Asthma Peak. By following a few important rules, they can both stay healthy and spend more time with their friends at school, learning and having fun!

PREVENTING THE
september
ASTHMA PEAK

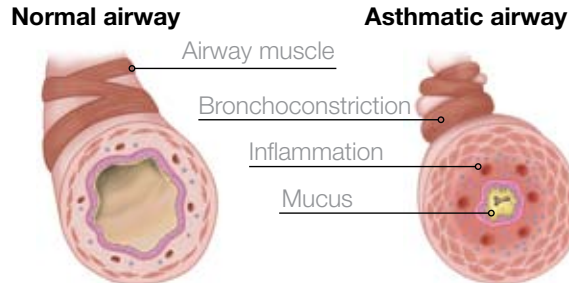

Asthma.ca
Asthma Society of Canada™



What is asthma?

Asthma is a condition that makes it harder to breathe. You cannot catch asthma from other people. If you have asthma, sometimes you will notice it, and sometimes you will not. But, it's always there.

Asthma happens when your airways – the tubes in your lungs that help you breathe – get swollen. This makes breathing harder. Sometimes your airways swell because of an allergy. Sometimes a virus, like the kind that causes the common cold, can make them swell.



Do I have asthma?

The more you know about asthma, the better you can control it. Here are some clues that can help your doctor figure out if you have asthma:

- Do you feel short of breath?
- Do you cough a lot?
- Do you get wheezy or make a whistling sound when you breathe?
- Do you get a tight or tickly feeling in your chest?

If you answered yes, you have some signs of asthma. But these signs do not mean you have asthma. Only a doctor can tell for sure with a few easy tests.

Will I outgrow asthma?

You cannot outgrow asthma but as you grow how your asthma affects you can change. For some kids, when they become teenagers, their asthma bothers them less. For others, it might just remain the same.

What is the September Asthma Peak?

Every year when the school year starts again, more asthma attacks occur and many children are sent to the hospital. That is why it is called the September Asthma Peak as asthma attacks peak during this month.

Why does this happen?

- Germs: back-to-school means sharing toys and food, and also germs, like the common cold, which can make asthma worse.
- Weather: cooler weather in the fall can cause asthma attacks.
- Medication: sometimes, if children feel better in the summertime, they skip their medicine. It is important to take asthma medicine all year long.

What can I do?

- If you think you have asthma, talk to your mom or dad, or the person who cares for you. Your doctor can teach you how to stay healthy and safe during the school year.
- If your doctor has given you medicine to help prevent asthma attacks, it is important to take it even if you feel good. If you stop, your asthma might get worse.
- Since the flu or the common cold can make asthma worse, some people have a flu shot. Ask your mom or dad, or the person who cares for you about the flu shot.
- If someone you know has asthma, spreading germs can make it worse. Wash your hands a lot, and try not to touch your eyes, nose or mouth.