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For Immediate Release

## **Back to School can mean Back to Asthma: Prepare your child for the September Asthma Peak**

TORONTO - It's back to school time again. With that there is a sense of excitement and optimism for kids – and some sense of relief for parents. However, for those with asthma, the fall can also bring anxiety for both kids and parents. “The arrival of the fall brings with it the September Asthma Peak, this is a serious concern for the 3 million Canadians with asthma – but especially for Children,” said Dr. Robert Oliphant, President & C.E.O. of the Asthma Society of Canada. In Canada, between 20 to 25 percent of children going to a hospital with asthma will arrive at Emergency Rooms in September alone. If your children are affected by asthma it is even more important to know how to keep their asthma under control than it is to pick up their school supplies and get new clothes. **With a bit of preparation, and good knowledge, kids can control their asthma – instead of having asthma control them.**

September Asthma Peak is mostly attributed to the increased exposure children have to viral infections that comes with the return to school. Research shows that more than 60 percent of children admitted to emergency rooms with asthma have rhinovirus (the common cold). Rhinovirus and other respiratory infections are common triggers of asthma symptoms, especially among children of school age. As they move from outdoors to indoors, children also might be more exposed to dust mites, molds and animal dander. And as they continue to enjoy playing outside, September is also ragweed season in Eastern Canada and grass and weed pollen season in Western Canada. These allergens are all potential asthma triggers.

It is important that your child's asthma be adequately controlled year round – and adjusted for various changes in their activities and the seasons. When your child's asthma is well controlled, your child should not experience any symptoms.

Here are a few suggestions to help get ready for going back to school:

- Speak to your child's school about their asthma policy and inhaler use.
- Develop a written Asthma Action Plan and make sure the school has a copy of it
- Consult your family doctor before school begins to find out which asthma medications are appropriate for your child.
- Ensure your child is on his or her asthma medication throughout the year, even when symptom free
- Monitor your child's symptoms daily, helping them to pay attention to them
- Identify triggers that make their asthma worse and teach your child how to best avoid them
- Speak to your child about the importance of hand washing to avoid catching a cold.

Asthma is a condition that can be managed and controlled when we are educated with a strategy for living a healthy and symptom free life. “As our children get set to return to school with excitement and anticipation of a new year, being prepared will mean you can rest easy and allow your children to live active and engaged lives!” said Dr. Oliphant. For more information, please visit our website <http://www.asthma.ca/adults/control/septemberPeak.php>.

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