

Allergic to School? Tips for Parents and Kids When Fall Allergy Symptoms Arise

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DENVER — As summer winds down families are getting ready for the new school year. In addition to school supplies and new clothes, parents of children with asthma need to make extra preparations to assure that their child is taken care of safely at school.

"With proper preparations, you can reduce the impact asthma has on your child at school," said Epi Mazzei, R.N. and manager of the LungLine® toll-free helpline at National Jewish. "A child with asthma should be able to join their classmates in almost every activity at school."

Below are several tips to help parents of children with asthma prepare for the new school year.

Asthma Action Plan

Ask your doctor for a [written Asthma Action Plan](#) for the school. This plan should include what medicine to use to treat asthma symptoms and changes in peak flow zones, what medication to use as a pretreatment before exercise, emergency telephone numbers and a list of things that make your child's asthma worse.

Meet with school staff

Plan a meeting with school staff before or in the beginning weeks of the school year. It is helpful to have the school nurse, health aide, teacher and physical education teacher at the meeting. Your child also can be involved in the meeting. Take the written Asthma Action Plan to the meeting. Review the Asthma Action Plan, use of the peak flow meter, medicines and things that make your child's asthma worse.

Special school supplies

Keep a [peak flow meter](#), spacer and rescue medicine at school for your child. Make sure the rescue medicine has not passed its expiration date. Takes these items home at the end of each school year.

Gym class

Make sure your child has a pretreatment for gym class or other physical activities, especially outdoors in cold weather.

Field trips

Asthma should not keep your child from participating in an off-site field trip. Be prepared to take medicines along to use for flare-ups.

Medication side effects

Studies have shown that asthma medicines typically don't cause concentration problems. However, if a child who receives high doses of medicine during an episode may experience side effects, such as restlessness and trouble concentrating.

Keep in touch

Continue talking with your child and school staff about managing asthma at school on a regular basis, even if everything is fine at school. Talk with the school staff if your child misses school and assignments.

When to stay home

Talk with your child's doctor about when it is okay to stay home from school because of asthma or illness. Mild asthma symptoms can usually be handled at school but there are a number of factors (what triggered the asthma, the stability of peak flows, fever, how much medicine your child is taking, etc.) to consider when deciding whether to keep your child at home.

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