

## Are Your Child's Asthma and Allergies Ready for School?

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DENVER — As summer winds down families are preparing for the new school year. In addition to school supplies and new clothes, parents of children with asthma and allergies need to make extra preparations to assure that their children remain healthy at school.

"With proper preparations, you can reduce the impact asthma and allergies have on your children while they are at school," said National Jewish pediatrician Dan Atkins, MD "A child with allergies and/or asthma should be able to join their classmates in almost every activity at school."

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

- **Check Medication Supplies.** Allergy and asthma symptoms often increase soon after school starts. Close contact with other children in enclosed spaces exposes them to respiratory viruses and animal dander that children with pets carry from home. Weed pollens are often at peak levels during the early weeks of school. Make sure your child's allergy and asthma medications prescriptions are filled so you can be ready to treat the very first signs of worsening symptoms.
- **Medications at School.** Schools have varying policies about children bringing medications to school. Contact your child's school and find out its policy. Many school districts require a doctor to fill out a form listing medications a child should be allowed to have at school. If needed, get those forms and make sure your doctor fills them out.
- **Stress.** The first weeks of school can be a stressful time, which can exacerbate existing allergies and asthma. Parents can help their children cope with the stresses of a new school year. "The first and most important step is listening to your child," says [Bruce Bender](#), PhD, Head of Pediatric Behavioral Health at National Jewish. "This underlies everything else. Sometimes listening is enough to initiate the changes you want." Give your children opportunities to talk and bring up issues that are on their mind. Often routine activities, such as sharing a meal, washing the dishes, walking the dog or driving to school, provide the best opportunities for conversation. Don't worry if you don't have an answer right away; listening is the most important thing.
- **Exercise.** Exercise is a common trigger for asthma symptoms. Make sure your child with asthma pretreats with a bronchodilator, such as albuterol, before gym class or other physical activities, especially outdoors in cold weather. Don't hesitate to call or send a note to the physical education teacher. During warm weather, when pollen is still in the air, outdoor exercise can exacerbate both asthma and allergies. Pretreatment with antihistamines and intranasal steroids can greatly reduce those symptoms.

The Pediatrics Department at National Jewish offers [NJ4Kids](#), a unique and comprehensive treatment program for children with asthma, allergies, atopic dermatitis and other respiratory, allergic and immune-related diseases.

**National Jewish Health** is the leading respiratory hospital in the nation. Founded 123 years ago as a nonprofit hospital, National Jewish Health today is the only facility in the world dedicated exclusively to groundbreaking medical research and treatment of patients with respiratory, cardiac, immune and related disorders. Patients and families come to National Jewish Health from around the world to receive cutting-edge, comprehensive, coordinated care. To learn more, visit the [media resources page](#).

### Media Contacts

Our team is available to arrange interviews, discuss events and story ideas.

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