

The allergist is listening: Five things they need to hear, from your child

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The allergist's office might not be a child's favorite place to visit, but it is a place where they should be able to say how their asthma makes them feel. While children might rely on parents to tell their doctor about how they are feeling, according to a study released today, children should do most of the talking.

The study, published in the July issue of *Annals of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology*, the scientific journal of the American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology (ACAAI), found that [children](#) with [asthma](#) report having a better quality of life in regards to activity limitation, than their parents think they have.

"Our research shows that physicians should ask parents and children about the effects asthma is having on the child's daily life," said lead study author Margaret Burks, MD. "Parents can often think symptoms are better or worse than what the child is really experiencing, especially if they are not with their children all day."

Seventy-nine pediatric asthma patients and their parents were enrolled in the study. While researchers noted useful information comes from caregivers' responses, it's important for the allergist to ask both the parents and children about symptoms, activity limitations and adherence to medications to better understand and treat the child's condition.

"Asthma is a serious condition that results in more than 10.5 million missed schools days for children annually," said James Sublett, MD,

chair of the ACAAI public relations committee. "It is important for children to tell their allergist about their symptoms so the best treatment can be provided and over-treating doesn't occur."

To help [parents](#) and their children understand the five most important topics they should discuss with their allergist, ACAAI has put together the following list.

1. Asthma prevents me from playing sports and taking part in other activities—If your child cannot play sports or participate in gym class and recess activities, it's important they tell their allergist. This can be an indication their asthma isn't properly controlled. If they can participate in activities, it is also important they tell their allergist, to show their condition is being well managed.

2. When I am outside or at home my asthma symptoms become worse—An estimated 60 to 80 percent of children with asthma also have an allergy. If nearly inescapable allergens, such as pollen, mold, dust and pet dander are triggering your child's [asthma symptoms](#), an allergist may include immunotherapy (allergy shots) as part of a treatment plan.

3. I often feel sad or different from other kids because I have asthma—Nearly half of children with asthma report feeling depressed or left out of activities due to their condition. Anyone with asthma should be able to feel good and be active. No one should accept less.

4. There have been times I have missed school because of my condition—Asthma is the most common chronic illness in childhood and is a leading cause of missed school days. Research shows children under the care of a board-certified allergist see a 77 percent reduction in lost time from school.

5. My asthma disappeared—It is important your child carry and use

their inhaler as prescribed, even if symptoms aren't bothersome. While asthma symptoms are controllable with the proper treatment, there isn't a cure for asthma and it likely won't disappear. An asthma attack can strike at any time.

Effective asthma control begins with the right diagnosis early in the disease by a board-certified allergist. Delays can lead to permanent lung damage. To learn more about asthma and to locate an [allergist](#) in your area, visit <http://www.AllergyAndAsthmaRelief.org>.

Provided by American College of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology

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