

Keeping classrooms safe for kids with asthma, allergies

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(HealthDay)—Parents of kids with asthma and allergies should prepare a

plan to keep them safe as schools reopen, the American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology (ACAAI) says.

Along with guarding against COVID-19, it's important to protect against cold, flu and other viruses that pose a risk to children with [asthma](#). That includes wearing masks, washing hands and using hand sanitizer whenever possible.

"We don't know what this fall and winter will bring, but if COVID-19 cases are again on the rise, it's important to keep everyone safe from the [flu virus](#) and out of the hospital," ACAAI President Dr. Luz Fonacier said in an association news release.

Flu shots are crucial—along with the COVID-19 vaccine for kids who are old enough. (The Pfizer vaccine is approved for those 12 and older.)

While flu numbers were down last year because folks stayed home, Fonacier said a [flu shot](#) this year can keep kids from getting sick with something that can be prevented.

It's also important for kids with asthma and allergies to avoid triggers. For example, [volatile organic compounds](#) (VOCs) given off by new carpeting can cause wheezing and sneezing.

Parents should consider: Is there new carpeting in school hallways? Are there open windows where pollen can drift into the classroom? Could a class pet be causing allergies? Is there mold in the bathrooms? It's important for parents to discuss potential triggers with [school officials](#) to help control their child's symptoms, Fonacier said.

Work with an allergist to make sure your child's medications are appropriate for their height and weight, their asthma action plan is up to date and that symptoms are under control, the ACAAI recommends.

Ideally, this should be done before school begins.

Children with asthma under the care of an allergist have a 77% reduction in lost time from school, according to the ACAAI.

If your child has food allergies, work with your allergist and [school staff](#) to create an action plan that lists the foods your child is allergic to, what treatment is required, as well as emergency contact information, the ACAAI urges.

More information: The American Academy of Pediatrics has more on [allergies and asthma](#).

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