

September is peak asthma month, allergist warns

July 29 2024, by Dennis Thompson



Peak asthma month is upon parents as summer draws to a close, experts warn.

"September is known as Asthma Peak Month because kids have returned to [school](#), and viruses are being passed around," said [allergist](#) Dr. Gailen Marshall, president of the American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology.

"September also sees higher levels of environmental allergens like mold and ragweed. In addition, children may have stopped their regular asthma management routine over the summer," Marshall added in a ACAAI news release. "Generally, allergists see an increase in patients in September—more asthma attacks and more hospitalizations—especially in children."

But there are ways parents can help their kids keep their [allergy](#) and asthma symptoms at bay as the school year resumes, Marshall said.

- **Find an allergist.** A pre-school appointment with a board-certified allergist can arm [parents](#) with an allergy or asthma action plan that identifies triggers and prepares prescriptions. Asthmatic kids under the care of an allergist have a 77% reduction in lost time from school, Marshall said.
- **Teamwork helps.** It's important to work with a child's teacher regarding their allergies and asthma, Marshall said. Most teachers have experience helping kids with asthma. Parents should be sure to share their child's treatment plan with school staff, including their asthma triggers and any treatments or medications they use.
- **Avoid viruses.** Respiratory viruses like the common cold, influenza, COVID-19 and RSV all contribute to [asthma attacks](#). Make sure kids are vaccinated against viruses that spread in crowded classrooms, and teach them ways to lower their risk, like proper hand hygiene.
- **Confirm any food allergies.** Unreliable sources and home tests sometimes provide misinformation about the food allergies a child might have. It's important to work with an allergist to

confirm any suspected food allergies, and to notify the school about anything a kid can't eat. About 5% to 8% of children have diagnosed food allergies, and it's important that they know of them and are armed with an epinephrine pen in case of an emergency.

- **Let them play ball.** Exercise is good for everyone, even kids with asthma or allergies. Children should be able to take part in sports they like, if they follow their allergists' advice. Playground games, phys ed and after-school sports all can trigger some constriction of the airways, but a child with well-controlled asthma should still be able to participate. In fact, [asthma symptoms](#) during exercise can indicate poorly controlled asthma that needs medical attention.

More information: The Allergy & Asthma Network has more on [managing asthma in school](#).

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