



September 2, 2014  
For Immediate Release

## **Is your child prepared for the September Asthma Peak?**

TORONTO – With the end of the summer upon us, school-aged children are beginning to head back into the classrooms for a new school year. Many children and parents anticipate the coming of the school year with excitement. However, for parents, it can also mean anxiety and concern over the health and well-being of their child. This is particularly true for parents of children with asthma.

“The arrival of the new school year also brings with it the September Asthma Peak,” said Dr. Robert Oliphant, President & C.E.O. of the Asthma Society of Canada. “This represents a serious concern for the more than 3 million Canadians with asthma, but especially children and their caregivers.” In Canada, 20 to 25 percent of children’s hospital admissions for asthma happen in the month of September.

If your child has asthma it is essential to know how to keep it under control as they return to school. Proper preparations to keep asthma well-controlled are as important as purchasing new school supplies and clothes. With the right planning, kids can control their asthma – instead of having their asthma control them.

September Asthma Peak is mostly attributed to the increased exposure children have to viral infections that comes with the return to school. Research shows that more than 60 percent of children admitted to emergency rooms with asthma have rhinovirus (the common cold). Rhinovirus and other respiratory infections are common triggers of asthma symptoms, especially among children of school age. As they move from outdoors to indoors, children also might be more exposed to dust mites, mould and animal dander. And as they continue to enjoy playing outside, September is also ragweed season in Eastern Canada and grass and weed pollen season in Western Canada. These allergens are all potential asthma triggers.

It is important that your child’s asthma be adequately controlled year round – and adjusted for various changes in their activities and the seasons. When your child’s asthma is well controlled, your child should not experience any symptoms.

The Asthma Society of Canada encourages parents to follow these 10 tips to ensure your child has a safe return to school this year:

- 1.** Develop or update a written Asthma Action Plan with your family doctor and make sure to provide a copy to your child’s school
- 2.** Speak to your child’s school about their asthma policy and inhaler use
- 3.** Identify triggers that make your child’s asthma worse and teach him or her how best to avoid them

- 4.** Treat allergies with anti-histamines, nasal steroids, allergy shots or pills, to help avoid an asthma attack
- 5.** Ensure your child takes his or her asthma medication throughout the year, even when symptom-free
- 6.** Help your child understand their asthma, including teaching them how to use their medication properly and knowing how to monitor their symptoms daily
- 7.** Speak to your child about the importance of hand washing to avoid catching a cold
- 8.** If your children are sick, keep them home from school
- 9.** Ensure your child, and everyone else in your home, has received their influenza (flu) vaccination
- 10.** Schedule regular asthma check-ups with your healthcare practitioner to ensure your child's asthma is properly controlled

Asthma is a condition that can be managed and controlled when we are educated with a strategy for living a healthy and symptom free life. For more information, please visit our website

<http://www.asthma.ca/adults/control/septemberPeak.php>.

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