

MANAGING ASTHMA AT SCHOOL

Parents need to take the first step

Keeping your child safe at school is a team effort.

Follow the steps below to help school nurses, teachers and other school personnel deal with your child's asthma or allergies. Taking just a few simple steps can ensure your child stays healthy throughout the school year.

- ◆ Schedule a meeting with teachers and the school nurse to discuss your child's condition.
- ◆ Encourage your children to take their maintenance medications as prescribed.
- ◆ Review your child's triggers with them and encourage them to ask their teacher for help when symptoms worsen.
- ◆ If your child is allergic to certain foods, inform school cafeteria staff and teachers. Tell them how to avoid the trigger and suggest safe alternatives for celebrations and class projects involving food. If possible, have your child bring a bag lunch to school or suggest an allergy-free lunch table.
- ◆ If your child is at risk for anaphylaxis, the child, teacher or school nurse should have at least one autoinjectable epinephrine, preferably two, on hand and know how to use it.
- ◆ Make sure physical education teachers, coaches, and bus drivers know about your child's asthma. Let them know the warning signs of an asthma attack.
- ◆ Work with your child's school system to address their concerns about your child's medical needs. Provide a written Asthma Action Plan or Anaphylaxis Action Plan to better control your child's health. Make this plan available to your school personnel.
- ◆ Encourage your child's health care provider to be an informational resource for the school.
- ◆ See a physician if your child is having trouble with learning, endurance, or alertness. These symptoms may be due to side effects of the child's condition or medications.
- ◆ Make sure your child has their medications (especially a quick relief inhaler or autoinjectable epinephrine), valved holding chamber or spacer and peak flow meter with them at school. Talk to school personnel about letting your child carry these medications with them throughout the day.
- ◆ Talk to your child's health care provider about the type of asthma controller medication your child is currently using. According to the most recent NAEPP guidelines (EPR-3, 2007), **an inhaled corticosteroid remains the best control medicine for persistent asthma.**

Source: American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology (2010). Available online at http://www.aaaai.org/patients/just4kids/classroom_corner/steps.stm