



HOW TO KEEP YOUR ASTHMA UNDER CONTROL THIS WINTER

The cold and flu season is upon us and this is the time of year when asthma symptoms -- coughing, wheezing or shortness of breath -- can worsen. While we can't control the winter weather, there is a lot you can do to control your child's asthma, regardless of their age, and to help them stay healthy.

PREVENTION WORKS! BE PREPARED!

If your child hasn't seen his/her doctor about his/her asthma this season, make an appointment to:

- Help ensure that your child's asthma is controlled
- Adjust your child's controller and/or rescue medications as needed
- Update your child's Asthma Action Plan, as needed – this care plan can help you know when and how to use each of your child's asthma medicines. Keep a copy nearby and give one to your school nurse/teacher
- Make sure you have up-to-date and enough medication when and where you'll need it* (i.e. home, school, with other caregivers, etc.)
- Get a flu vaccine for your child—it's not too late! The flu vaccine is the best way to protect your family from influenza, which can worsen asthma symptoms.

Know the early warning signs of an asthma attack so you can catch it early and prevent an emergency or very serious situation. When in doubt call 911.

Prevent triggers that can make asthma worse:

- Breathing in cold air: Use scarves and neck warmers to keep your child's neck and face covered.
- Colds and influenza: Wash your hands frequently and avoid people who are sick or coughing.
- Cigarette and other tobacco smoke: Don't smoke in your car or home and use a separate "smoking jacket" that you leave outside of your home. If you are interested in learning more about quitting smoking contact the Massachusetts Smokers' Helpline: 1-800- QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669)
- Dust mites in your home if your child is allergic: Use dust mite-proof mattress and pillows covers, use a HEPA vacuum to clean floors, and frequently wash comforters and children's stuffed animals by heating them in a hot clothes dryer for 20 minutes every week.

*Note: It is very important to make sure your child has enough of his/her prescribed daily and emergency asthma medications. Be sure to get refills and ensure the proper medications are on hand and not expired. The medication may save your child's life. A spacer helps to make sure the medicine reaches your child's lungs properly. No matter how old your child is, your support is important. Please help ensure they have proper medication and are taking their medications properly. Even if your child feels or seems okay, it is important that they stay on their controller medications as prescribed.

Ask your doctor or local pharmacist if you need medical advice or support.

All students and parents should contact their doctor and school nurse for more information.

For additional information visit bphc.org/asthma



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