

Eight Steps to a Safe School Year for Kids with Allergies and Asthma

For millions of children with allergies and asthma, heading back-to-school with high levels of fall pollens and molds in the air can really take a toll.

Allergy & Asthma Care Center and the American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology (ACAAI) suggest the following to help prevent allergy and asthma flare-ups.

- Schedule a back-to-school check-up.** Visit your allergist to be sure your child's allergy and asthma symptoms are under control.
- Share treatment plan with school staff.** Give school staff a copy of your child's treatment plan which should include a list your child's allergies or asthma triggers, a list of your child's medications and emergency contact information. Meet with the school nurse, teachers and coaches to discuss the plan.
- Discuss how to handle emergencies.** With an allergist's recommendation, children should be permitted to keep medications with them at school, such as inhalers or epinephrine kit for those at risk of a life-threatening allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) caused by allergies to certain foods or insect stings. Be sure that your child and school staff knows how to use emergency medications and complete a permission form that allows school staff to administer medications if needed.
- Make sure your child understands what triggers allergies or asthma.** Discuss steps to avoid triggers while at school, like sitting far from the blackboard if chalk dust triggers asthma. If your child is allergic to animal dander, ask that class pets that could trigger a reaction, such as hamsters and rabbits, be removed.
- Hit the gym.** After school sports, recess and gym class activities can trigger asthma attacks. Work with coaches, recess monitors and physical education teachers, so they recognize the major signs and symptoms of asthma, such as coughing, wheezing and shortness of breath.
- Share food allergy information far and wide.** Share a list of the foods your child is allergic to and safe alternatives with teachers, lunch attendants, the school nurse, class volunteers, and Boy or Girl Scout leaders.
- Ward off the flu.** Have your child get a flu shot, especially if they have asthma
- Tour your child's school.** Visit areas such as classrooms, art rooms, the gymnasium and cafeteria to identify substances that may trigger your child's asthma or allergies.

Visit AllergyAndAsthmaRelief.org to learn more about allergies and asthma.