Back to School 2013 – Tips for Parents and Carers

A significant ‘spike’ in asthma symptoms, and subsequent hospital admissions of children occurs during the first few weeks of Term 1. While there have not been direct links established, the February ‘asthma spike’ is believed to be largely due to children coming into contact with triggers that they have had time away from now that they have returned to school.

**What can parents and carers do to help their children avoid asthma exacerbations at school?**

- Ensure that your child is always carrying their reliever medication (eg. Ventolin, Asmol, Airomir or Bricanyl) as well as a spacer. Also ensure that you provide medication to the school or preschool that your child attends if required.
- Ensure that you have provided the school or preschool with an updated Asthma Action Plan that has been signed by a medical practitioner.
- Ensure that your child knows how to recognise early asthma symptoms, and can self-administer their reliever medication properly.
- Encourage your child to seek assistance from school/preschool staff if they experience asthma symptoms.

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Preparing Your Child for School Sports Days

Sports carnivals are an important highlight in every school’s calendar, and it is important that all students are able to participate to the best of their abilities. Exercise is a trigger for over 50% of people with asthma, so asthma exacerbations are common on sports days. Parents and carers can take several easy steps to help manage their child’s asthma, and to prevent them from having a serious asthma attack.

- Return an updated Asthma Action Plan to the school so that staff are ready to respond appropriately to any asthma symptoms that your child may have.
- Teach your child to recognise early asthma symptoms, and help them to feel confident to self-administer reliever medication (also using a spacer where possible).
- Encourage your child to notify staff if they experience asthma symptoms, even if they self-administer reliever medication and feel comfortable returning to activity.
- Be aware that if your child is unwell or has poorly managed asthma, they are more likely to experience symptoms during exercise.

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For further information, please contact the Asthma Foundation of Victoria on 1800 645 130 or email schools@asthma.org.au
ALERT: SCHOOL & EARLY CHILDHOOD STAFF
ASTHMA INHALER RECALL (limited batch numbers)

Asthma Australia has been advised that several batches of Ventolin and Asmol inhaler medication for the treatment of asthma have been recalled by GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) and Alphapharm, in consultation with the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA).

This recall has been initiated due to a fault in the delivery mechanism of a small number of inhalers within each affected batch. This can lead to less than the full dose being delivered for each puff. **Asthma Australia has been advised that a medical assessment has determined that the overall risk to patients is low; people should still act to replace inhalers that could be affected.**

The only batches affected are as follows:
Ventolin Batch numbers KN7170, KN7173, KN7178, and KN7179
Asmol Batch Numbers KL6790, KL6795, KL6796, KL6797, KL6798, and KL6799

**The TGA advice has more information:**

**What you need to do**

Asthma Emergency Kits are used in schools, early childhood settings and other community settings. Reliever medication is included for use in an asthma emergency. If you have asthma medication on site, it is important that you:

- Check the batch number of all asthma puffers/inhalers in your Asthma Emergency Kits / other asthma first aid devices (remove the canister from the inhaler tube and check the batch number on the bottom of the canister label)
- If these match any of the above batches, **take the inhaler to your pharmacy and exchange it for a new one**
- If your batch numbers don’t match those above, keep using the inhaler as normal.

For further information contact your local pharmacist or your local Asthma Foundation 1800ASTHMA (1800 278 462)