



SUMMER ASTHMA CARE FOR CHILDREN/YOUNG PEOPLE – 2021

At last the summer seems to have arrived! It might seem a long way off (and we hate to talk about this now when we're all so looking forward to some much needed time off) but each September there is a sharp peak in asthma-related hospital admissions across the country, known as the September/Week 38 Asthma Spike. So why tell you about this now, in July? Well, because how you look after asthma now and over the summer impacts you and your child/young person's asthma in September.

SEPTEMBER ASTHMA SPIKE

In Week 38, the risk of asthma attacks and hospital admissions in children/young people peaks. This 'September Spike' is thought to occur due to:

- Children/young people returning to school having been out of all routines over the summer (including often not taking their preventative medication)
- The weather changing
- Children/young people being exposed to several new bugs and viruses

(Source: Asthma UK and NARD Death Review)

OUR TOP TIPS FOR LOOKING AFTER ASTHMA THIS SUMMER

- **Use your preventer inhaler every day, even when you feel well.** The benefit of the preventer inhaler builds up over time and protects the airways from getting inflamed, and you are less likely to react to your triggers. Ensure you had a good routine this summer to remember/take it each day; remember to pack it if you are going away; put it somewhere where you won't miss it (next to your toothbrush perhaps).
- **Use a spacer (even adults).** Spacers are important with metered dose inhalers (push down-type inhalers) to ensure that all of the medicine gets to where it is needed in the lungs.
- **Always carry your reliever inhaler (usually blue) with you.** Just in case you have any symptoms and to ensure you are asthma attack ready.
- **Check your inhaler technique.** Using your inhaler in the correct way can make a big difference to how much medication gets into your lungs and may reduce side effects. Don't assume that because you have used an inhaler for many years that your inhaler technique can't be improved! You can ask your asthma nurse to check this or watch inhaler technique videos on the Asthma UK website: <https://www.asthma.org.uk/advice/inhaler-videos/>.
- **Be prepared for/avoid any known asthma triggers.** For instance, animals, weather, pollen and pollution.

PREPARING TO RETURN TO SCHOOL

1.

Ensure your child/young person has an annual asthma review

2.

Take an in-date and full emergency reliever inhaler (and spacer) to the school

3.

Give the school an up-to-date copy of your child/young person's personalised asthma action plan

4.

Ensure that the school are aware of any known asthma triggers for your child/young person

These simple measures can ensure that the staff caring for your child/young person have everything they need to look after your child's asthma and, very importantly, it is up to date. The summer holidays are the perfect time to make sure that the annual asthma review is done, especially when so many have been missed during the coronavirus pandemic.

PERSONALISED ASTHMA ACTION PLANS (PAAPS)

A personalised asthma action plan provides personalised information on the medication being taken and what to do when asthma is getting worse. Using a PAAP means people with asthma are four times less likely to need hospital care for asthma (Source: Asthma UK).

These forms can be downloaded from the Asthma UK website (<https://www.asthma.org.uk/advice/manage-your-asthma/action-plan/>). Take one with you when you next see your asthma nurse and ask them to help you fill it in.



HOW CAN MASH HELP?



MASH supports people and families affected by asthma in Medway. We aim to improve awareness and understanding of asthma, its triggers and treatment, and to empower people with asthma to self-manage their condition. **All of our services are free and open to all.**

Our asthma nurse can provide advice and support with asthma – discuss medications, asthma reviews and personalised asthma action plans. Letters containing the advice given and any recommendations will continue to be sent to clients to forward to their GPs. When face-to-face appointments are able to safely resume, we will again be able to offer spirometry and FeNO testing for asthma diagnoses and monitoring, and airborne allergy testing.

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