



**Weill Cornell
Medicine**
Pediatric
Asthma Program

Asthma Newsletter - Winter 2023

A collaboration between NewYork-Presbyterian/Weill Cornell Medical Center and NewYork-Presbyterian Queens

The Basics

If you have a diagnosis of asthma, the cold winter air can make it even more difficult to catch your breath. Cold air can make symptoms worse and cause coughing, wheezing and shortness of breath.

Here are some tips to get you through the winter weather:

Make sure you follow your asthma action plan and have all your medications. Contact your healthcare provider if your symptoms are not improving after 24 hours.

Limit your exposure to cold air and wind. Prior to going outside, cover your nose and mouth with a face covering or scarf. Remember to breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth.

Avoid outdoor exercises during severe cold weather.

If you are shoveling snow, be careful to not overwork yourself and pay attention to your asthma symptoms.

Preparing for the NEW YEAR

Don't like making New Year's Resolutions because you usually quit soon after the New Year?

Here is one resolution you can make that ***involves*** quitting:

RESOLVE to QUIT smoking!!

Tobacco smoke is a common trigger for asthma. Tobacco smoke, including secondhand smoke, is unhealthy for everyone, especially people with asthma.

If you are thinking about quitting smoking and would like some help, a Quitline might be just what you need to succeed! Quitline's provide free coaching, over the phone, to help you quit smoking. When you call **1-800-QUIT-NOW**, you can speak confidentially with a highly trained quit coach.

QUIT today - your lungs will thank you.

Teen Tips: Smoking/Vaping

By Taylor P., age 16, Asthma Patient

As we approach the New Year, let's discuss a big and scary decision - saying no to smoking and vaping!

We all know this dangerous habit is neither cool nor healthy. The truth is that smoking or vaping only harms your health and leaves you with no benefits.

It can be challenging to say no, but your health and well-being **must** come first. If you are in a situation where people peer pressure you to try it, remember it is okay to say no. It is not always easy to decline the offer, but keep your health and future in mind.

Surround yourself with friends who respect your choices, so saying no will come easier. Believe me, your future self will thank you if you say no and make the right decision.

Scan this code to learn more about the effects of smoking and vaping on people with asthma.



Contact: PedsAsthma@med.cornell.edu

Asthma Tip Corner : Handwashing

Handwashing is one of the **best** ways to help protect yourself and your family from getting sick.

WHEN should you wash your hands?

- When preparing food
- Before and after eating food
- Before and after caring for someone at home who is sick with vomiting or diarrhea
- Before and after treating a cut or wound
- After using the toilet
- After changing diapers or cleaning up a child who has used the toilet
- After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing

HOW should you wash your hands?

- Wet your hands under clean running water
- Lather your hands, front and back, with soap. Scrub between your fingers and under your nails.
- Scrub your hands for at least 20 seconds (sing or hum the "Happy Birthday" song twice!)
- Rinse your hand under clean running water
- Dry your hands with a clean towel or an air dryer
- **When you don't have soap and water, use hand sanitizer!**

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Website

MEDucation Corner

Let's learn about Tamiflu!

What is it used for?

This prescription medication is used to help treat the flu which is different from a common cold.

How is it taken?

It is usually taken by mouth as a capsule or suspension. If you are unable to swallow the capsule this medication can be opened and mixed with some liquid.

What should I expect while taking this medication?

This drug may reduce how long you have the flu if taken within 48 hours of flu-like symptoms. It may cause stomach issues, but this is temporary. For anything out of the ordinary, please consult your healthcare provider.



Impact of Poor Sleep Habits

Nighttime asthma symptoms can lead to poor sleep and can make a person irritable and unable to concentrate in the daytime.

Asthma symptoms at night can be managed by taking the proper medication. If your child is having a nighttime cough, talk to your child's healthcare provider to get your child on the correct treatment plan.

Indoor allergens or exposure to outdoor allergens during the day, can also lead to nighttime cough. . Being able to sleep for at least 8 hours without exposure to allergens leads to better sleep, so it is important to know your child's allergies. Being able to reduce allergens or triggers and making lifestyle changes is an important part of good asthma control. If your child is asthmatic with unknown allergy triggers please reach out to your healthcare provider to get the best possible solution to managing their asthma symptoms.

According to the American Lung Association, in a 2013 survey, 49% of school-aged children missed school because of asthma symptoms (that's one in every two students!).

Missed school days may lead to poor school performance leading to a child falling behind in school or being unable to graduate on time. Missed school days may also mean that caretakers and parents need to take time off of work to care for a sick child.

Working with your child's healthcare provider to develop an asthma action plan that you and your child can follow is the key to good asthma management.

American Lung Association Website



Asthma Champion Spotlight: Susan McKillop, MSNeD, BSN, RN, AE-C ASTHMA EDUCATOR



Can you tell us about your background?

I have been a registered nurse for a long time. I've spent most of my nursing career here at NYP/Weill Cornell Medicine and have worked in various roles within the department of pediatrics. I began my work on the general pediatric floor caring for hospitalized children. Over the next decade I worked in a variety of settings, including: pediatric research, the pulmonary and allergy department, and the out-patient pediatrics floor. Having spent the early years of my nursing career raising my three children, I was finally able to return to school for my masters degree in nursing education at age 55.

What made you want to become an asthma educator?

While I originally went to college to become a teacher, I realized two years into the program that being in the classroom was not what I wanted as a career. After taking some time off and moving to NYC, I attended nursing school. The role of asthma educator allows me to combine my educational background in child development with the skills I developed with my nursing degree. I feel like I have come full circle in my career now being able to prioritize teaching with my patients.

What I love the most about this role is the opportunity to work with families one-on-one. I have the chance to share what it means to have an asthma diagnosis and how our asthma team cares for children with asthma. We work with families to create an asthma action plan, we review that plan together with the family, and work to make sure that they understand and agree with following the plan at home. I love my job!

What type of help do you provide asthma patients and their families?

I like to call the work that I do the "complete package". I always start by asking families how much they want to learn about asthma - I always hope they answer with "everything"! I love to start with some basic anatomy and physiology: How do our lungs work when we take a breath? What happens to the airways when asthma is not under good control? I discuss triggers and work to help families identify their triggers and then how to decrease exposure to their triggers. I also work with families to identify what other asthma supports they may need to improve their asthma including home/environmental issues and social/mental health services. I teach patients and their families how to use medications properly and understand the early signs and symptoms of an asthma attack. I work with the asthma care team to reassess the patient and their treatment plan, it plays a very important part in my education. Our asthma team has several partners who work closely with us to provide the best care for our patients!

Do you have any tips for asthma patients who want to learn how to self-manage?

I love to work with these kids, seeing them take the first steps in caring for themselves and their asthma is rewarding! While I am always here to support our patients, I would first ask the following questions: 1) Are you ready? 2) Do you understand when your asthma is being triggered and are you able to take action? 3) Can you self-carry your medications and use them properly?

How should I contact you for asthma education?

You can call my direct line (212-746-0898). Leave me a message with your child's name and I will return your call.

What hobbies do you enjoy in your spare time?

I have many hobbies! I love to garden and propagate plants. I love to create/craft things. With the holiday season I make all sorts of wreaths and drift wood creations. I am starting to dry flowers and make note cards. I love to swim and even take cold plunges in the winter!

Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP)

The Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) can help eligible New Yorkers heat and cool their homes. If you are eligible, you may receive one regular HEAP benefit per program year and could also be eligible for emergency HEAP benefits if you are in danger of running out of fuel or having your utility service shut off.

Scan this code to learn more about program eligibility and how to apply.



Word Search

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Inflammation

Allergies

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Asthma

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