

## Back-to-School with Asthma Checklist

### ☐ Step 1 – Learn about asthma

Learning about asthma is easy. The American Lung Association has many [free resources](#) to help you, your child and their caregivers learn how to keep asthma in good control. Well controlled asthma is the key to helping your child stay healthy and active.

- Visit [www.lung.org/asthma](http://www.lung.org/asthma) to learn about asthma and asthma management. Be sure to watch the short animation [What is Asthma?](#) to learn what happens in the airways during asthma episode.
- [Asthma Basics](#) is a 50-minute online educational tool for people living with asthma or anyone who provides care for someone living with asthma. It teaches how to recognize and manage asthma symptoms, how to identify and reduce triggers, how to create an asthma management plan and how to respond to a breathing emergency.
- If you have a child with asthma, [Lungtropolis](#) is the web site to visit together. You'll find action-packed games designed to help kids control their asthma — plus advice for parents like you.

### ☐ Step 2 – Talk to the school nurse

A visit or phone call to the school nurse should be your next step. Together, you and the school nurse along with your child's health care provider can work to [reduce asthma triggers](#) and [manage symptoms](#) while in school.

- Ask the school nurse to explain and provide all of the required forms you and your child's health care provider need to sign and complete.
- Discuss your child's asthma triggers and steps to reduce them in the classroom.
- Ask about the school's asthma emergency plan, and if coaches, teachers and staff are trained in how to recognize asthma symptoms and respond to a breathing emergency.
- All 50 states and the District of Columbia allow children to self-carry and use their asthma inhalers while at school. Asthma can be fatal and you never know when asthma symptoms may occur. Discuss the policies and practices to ensure immediate access to your child's asthma medication while at school.

Visit [www.lung.org/asthma](http://www.lung.org/asthma) to learn more about asthma, and how to help schools become more [asthma-friendly](#).

### ☐ Step 3 - Schedule Asthma Check-up

Each school year should begin with a visit to your child's health care provider for an asthma check-up. This check-up is the best time to make sure your child is on the right amount of medicine for their asthma, to fill-out any forms required by the school and to create an [asthma management plan](#) as described in Step 4.

Kids with asthma should visit their health care provider at least once a year and more often when they are having symptoms. It's important that your child has an updated [asthma action plan](#) on

file at school and one at home and has been trained to use the prescribed medicines and devices. Visit [how to make your medical visits more satisfying](#) to find helpful hints on how to talk to your child's health care provider.

- ▶ If your child uses a [spacer or valved-holding chamber](#) or a [peak flow meter](#), ask your healthcare provider for a prescription for two; one can be kept at home and one at school. A peak flow meter at school will help the school nurse assess your child's asthma symptoms.
- ▶ Asthma medicine only works if it is taken correctly. Your healthcare provider can teach your child the correct way to hold and inhale the medicine. Visit [www.lung.org/asthmameds](http://www.lung.org/asthmameds) to watch how-to videos for using inhalers and to print easy-to-follow instructions.
- ▶ It's important for all kids to stay active, especially those with asthma. Discuss the types of physical activity and sports your child wants to play and the steps to take avoid symptoms while exercising. Follow these steps to help your child [stay active with asthma](#).

#### **Don't have health insurance?**

Visit [HealthCare.gov](http://HealthCare.gov) to learn more about affordable health coverage for your family.

Remember to provide all of the signed paperwork to the school nurse to ensure your child can use asthma inhalers as prescribed and participate in physical activity. Every child with well-controlled asthma can and should be encouraged to participate in physical activity.

#### **☐ Step 4 - Develop an Asthma Action Plan**

An [asthma action plan](#) is a written worksheet created by your health care provider and tailored to your child's needs. The plan includes a list of their asthma triggers and symptoms, the names of their medicines and how much medicine to take when needed. The plan also explains the steps to take to manage an asthma episode and a breathing emergency.

An asthma action plan should always be on file at in the school nurse's office at easily accessible to anyone who may need to help your child use their inhaler. Everyone who comes in contact with your child at school also has a copy, including teachers, coaches, school bus drivers and after-school care programs. Keep a copy for yourself to help you manage your child's asthma symptoms when he's at home.

#### **☐ Step 5 – Get a Flu Shot**

On average, 1 out of 5 Americans suffer from [influenza \(flu\)](#) every year. Respiratory infections such as the flu are one of the most common asthma triggers. The American Lung Association's [Asthma Clinical Research Centers](#) found the flu shot is safe for people with asthma. The best way to protect your family from the flu is for everyone over the age of six month to get vaccinated.

The American Lung Association's [Helpline](#) is staffed by Registered Respiratory Therapists and Registered Nurses who are ready to answer questions regarding asthma, lung health, and provide resources to help smokers quit. Call 1-800-LungUSA (1-800-586-4872).