

## How to Avoid Back-to-School Allergies & Asthma Symptoms

*Courtesy of: Science Daily Magazine*

For children with asthma and allergies, the fall season can bring a host of triggers that can put them at risk. Fortunately, these children and their parents, can manage back-to-school hazards with good planning, awareness and communication.

"Allergies that are properly treated should not keep these kids from doing what any other kid can do," says Michelle Freas, R.N., medical education coordinator at the Kunsberg School on the National Jewish Medical and Research Center campus. Here are some tips, courtesy of Freas, to avoid asthma attacks and allergy symptoms this fall:

### Outdoor Allergens

Ragweed, other weeds and molds are the environmental culprits, since grasses and trees have already pollinated. Freas tells children who

know they are allergic to use common sense: "Don't run through the weeds on your way to soccer practice! And when you get home, take off your jacket, change clothes and get them washed. Don't sit on the sofa with pollen-covered clothes."

### Classroom Pets

Furry animals such as gerbils, hamsters, rabbits and guinea pigs, are wriggling balls of allergens for kids who react to animal hair. "Children may already know they're allergic to cats and dogs, but they don't think about these other critters," Freas says. "If the kids and parents get to vote on what pet they want, choose a reptile or fish. Those are fine in a classroom." Kids can also monitor their own reactions. "Don't volunteer

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## It's Not Too Late! Sign Up for the Breath of Life Walk Today!



**Saturday October 6th**  
**West Valley College**  
**Saratoga**

Walk starts at 10 am  
Registration opens at 8:30

This fall, make a difference in the lives of those suffering from lung disease. Our leisurely 5K Walk is a family-friendly event that people of all ages and abilities can enjoy. Come on out and raise money to let us continue working to help local lung disease patients breathe easier. Or if you can't make it to the walk this year, show your support by making a pledge to another walker. Your Every dollar helps!

[www.BreathofLifeWalk.org](http://www.BreathofLifeWalk.org)

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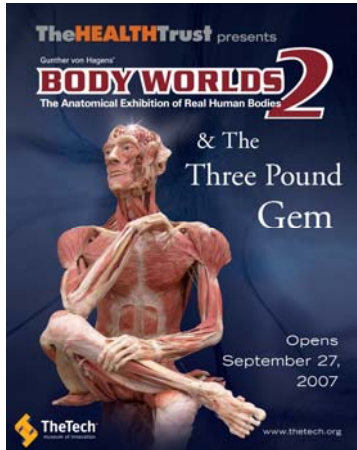
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## BODY WORLDS: Real Humans. Real Science. Really Amazing.



Gunther von Hagens' *BODY WORLDS 2 & The Three Pound Gem: The Anatomical Exhibition of Real Human Bodies* is coming to The Tech Museum of Innovation in San Jose and you don't want to miss out! Presented by the Health Trust, *BODY WORLDS 2* features more than 200 authentic specimens, including entire bodies, individual organs, and body slices that were generously willed by body donors for the expressed purpose of plastination. Breathe California is proud to be one of only a few local agencies selected to help provide educational support for this unforgettable display of human anatomy, physiology and health. The exhibit opens Sep 27<sup>th</sup> and will run throughout the fall, offering guests an unparalleled view inside the human body.



As the event's featured lung health experts, Breathe California is also excited to announce that it will be hosting a one-day Lung Health Exhibition at The Tech Museum in conjunction with *BODY WORLDS 2* on Sunday Nov. 11<sup>th</sup>. This FREE event will boast a number of interactive and informative features, including a forum on healthcare legislation, a selection of environmental films, lung disease screenings, quit-smoking workshops as well as displays, information and expert speakers on other lung health topics. Join us for our exhibition and then stay to check out *BODY WORLDS 2*!

To help make this unforgettable exhibit a true success, we need your help! Volunteer on November 11<sup>th</sup> to help us put on our one-day exhibition by contacting Patricia Tind at (408) 998-5865 or [patricia@lungsrus.org](mailto:patricia@lungsrus.org). To learn more about the exhibit or to order tickets, visit [www.thetech.org](http://www.thetech.org) or call 408-294-TECH (8324).

### How to Avoid Back-to-School...

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to feed the gerbil, and if you touch it, wash your hands afterwards," Freas suggests. "Choose a desk on the other side of the room from the pets."

#### Field Trips

Asthma and allergies should not exclude any child from field trips. "We just have to know who has a problem and what to do about it," says Freas. "For kids with severe asthma or allergies, we take their medications with us" A petting zoo for small children may cause flare-ups, however, since children actually touch the animals. "Keep the teacher informed," Freas suggests, "or volunteer to go on the field trip."

#### Homework, Tests and Friendships

"There shouldn't be any problem completing homework," Freas says. "If a child has an attack, he or she might be crabby and irritable, but that's not an excuse." Someone who has been highly medicated may get drowsy, but in general, homework, grades and test performance need not suffer. The same goes for friendships and socializing. "If you take your medication two or three times a day before school, after school and at bed time, no one even has to know that you have allergies," Freas says. "These

kids have to live with their condition and manage them. Otherwise, chronic illness has control over their life instead of the child controlling the illness."

#### 'Action Plan' for Children with Asthma

When parents of children with asthma start getting school supplies together this time of the year, they need to add another item to the list: an asthma action plan. An asthma action plan is written with the help of the child's doctor, and includes the child's asthma triggers, asthma early warning signs and what to do in an emergency. Parents can be proactive by meeting the child's teacher or the school nurse before the school year starts and explaining the asthma action plan.

"It's a big mistake to send a child to school without telling anyone they have asthma," explains Epi Mazzei, R.N., LUNG LINE manager at National Jewish Medical and Research Center. "Some children play and do fine, but when it gets cold or pollens are in the air--that throws them over the edge into an asthma attack. Kids know when they aren't feeling well. Encourage the child to be proactive."

*To learn more about how you can avoid back to school asthma and allergy symptoms, contact Breathe California by calling (408) 998-5865 or visiting [www.lungsrus.org](http://www.lungsrus.org)*

## Camp Superstuff Works Its Magic Again!

Sometimes known for sitting on the sidelines, they held nothing back. As they ran, swam and dove for fly balls, the kids at Camp Superstuff held their heads high, emphatically saying no to being breathless. For this camp wasn't just about having fun - for kids like Niamh Haller, it was about taking control of their asthma and discovering how to live life to its fullest.

"I've had asthma since I was born and I always seemed to have a hard time being active," said Haller, 11. "But here at Camp Superstuff it's different, I don't feel as different."

Enjoying the perfect mixture of learning and fun, twenty kids with asthma spent the week of July 30th at Breathe California's annual day camp. There, they took part in a number of activities to teach them about their disease and how to better manage it. In the classroom, campers' faces were bright as they took part in interactive lessons and absorbed new information about asthma. "Woah! Our lungs do that?" exclaimed camper Max Partridge, 8, after counselor Titi Le described how the body reacts during an asthma attack, "I didn't even know!"

In addition to learning important skills like how to recognize and avoid attack triggers, campers also had a chance to just be kids. Each day featured a number of games, field trips and outdoor activities that allowed campers to bond with one another and put into practice what they had learned. Furthermore, the camp also offered participants a safe and comfortable atmosphere



that helped them to fully and freely enjoy camp activities without fear of an attack.

As Candace Hom, a mother of two return campers, said, "The kids go to other camps and the whole time I clutch the phone and worry, but not this week - I know they're okay here." Added her son Dillon Le, "I liked everything, but the best thing was being able to enjoy regular activities without fear of asthma."

As the week came to a close, campers left not only with new friends and memories, but also the skills to better manage their condition. And more importantly, they left with a newfound confidence that comes with learning the most important lesson of them all - asthma doesn't have to control you; you can control your asthma.

## Gene Variations May Play Role in Risk for Developing Asthma

*Science Daily, August 23, 2007*

New research conducted at the University of Southern California has found a link between an individual's genes and their risk for developing asthma in childhood. In studying 3,000 subjects from Southern California who participated in the Children's Health survey, the researchers found that children who had high levels of microsomal epoxide hydrolase (EPHX1) - an enzyme that metabolizes hydrocarbons in vehicle emissions- were more likely to develop asthma. In addition, those with high levels of EPHX1 who also had variation in the GSTP1 gene, were four times more likely to have asthma.

Coming on the heels of a previous USC study that found a link between freeway proximity and the development of childhood asthma, researchers also looked at how the genetic variations impacted this higher risk group. Researchers found that these correlations were even

stronger among those living within 75 meters of major roads, with those with the variations more than 3x more likely to develop asthma than those without them,

"This is one of the first studies to report that children with certain genetic backgrounds are even more susceptible to asthma than if they lived near major road and did not carry the variations," said Muhammad T. Salam, PhD, lead author of the USC study. "We are working to understand how traffic-related exposure may interact with these genes, leading to asthma development."

While the study has provided the most solid evidence to-date of a link between genes and asthma, the authors cautioned that additional research is needed to fully understand the impact that these and other genetic variations may have on the development of asthma.



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