

Children with Asthma Need a Plan to Avoid Back-to-School Attacks

Sources: *Breathe California, MSNBC and Newswise.com*

With the start of fall comes cooler weather, changing leaves, and of course, the start of the school year. However, fall also brings with it a common complication for children suffering from asthma. The season is home to the emergency of a number of new allergens, colds and viruses which are common asthma triggers. In addition, as children return to the classroom, they are exposed to a whole new environment full of potential triggers. As a result, doctors and hospitals report seeing a large volume of pediatric asthma cases each fall. Yet, in spite of this increased risk, parents often ignore the simple steps they can take to prevent their child's asthma from starting the school year healthy.

A new survey published in MSNBC.com found that parents of asthmatic children are not taking adequate precautions as the school year begins. The survey of more than 2,000 parents found that while 73% of them are concerned that asthma may be affecting their child's classroom performance, less than one-third



have taken the proper measures to keep their child's asthma under control while at school.

To ensure that their child can learn with the least amount of asthma-related interruptions, parents should consult their child's physician to create a written back-to-school asthma plan. This plan should include information about the child's symptoms, attack triggers, daily medications, a rescue inhaler, any limitations on physical activity and specific instructions on what to do if a child has an attack at school. Parents should then share this information with school staff so they are aware of how to monitor the child's condition. With

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Our Name Has Changed, But We Have Not!

Breathe California of the Bay Area was formerly known as the American Lung Association of Santa Clara-San Benito Counties (1970-2005). While the local agency is no longer affiliated with the ALA, we continue to fight lung disease and protect lung health in our communities.



Join Us for the Next PAC Meeting

Thursday, Sep. 21st
Washington Elementary School
DETAILS INSIDE



Camp Superstuff Rocks Through Another Summer!

At first glance, Camp Superstuff looks like your run-of-the-mill summer day camp. But after talking to campers like Jackee Thompson for just a few minutes, anyone will see that this camp offers an experience that is quite extraordinary.

"When I was younger I didn't know what was wrong with me and I didn't know what to do," recalled Jackee. "I found out I had asthma but didn't really know what it was." When her asthma continued to prevent her from doing many everyday activities, her doctor recommended that she attend Camp Superstuff. Now after returning for her second year, Jackee is feeling more at ease with her condition.

"I have been doing better and better since coming to camp because before I didn't really know what asthma was or how to control it," she continued. Camp has let me know that I'm not the only one with asthma and that you shouldn't be ashamed of having it."

Jackee's experience is just one the many success stories shared by the 23 kids who attended Camp Superstuff this past summer at the Camden Community Center. Campers participated in daily asthma management lessons which included learning how to properly take their medication and recognize the warning signs of an asthma attack. "Camp has helped me because I know how to breathe, how to use other medicine," said camper A'nerra Clark. "I learned about my body and now feel in control."



In addition, these classes were coupled with a number of exciting games and activities that let the kids just be kids. On any given day, campers could be seen going for a swim, playing twister and taking field trips to places such as Great America - all while forming many new friendships. "Camp is fun and you make a lot of new friends," said Andrew Lewis. "And you know that you're not the first one who has had asthma or the only one who has it."

By week's end, campers went home with priceless memories and a newly-gained knowledge of their asthma. And as they shared their experiences with their families on how they could breathe easier, many parents came to realize what an unique opportunity Camp Superstuff

offers. "The camp is great," remarked Willet Tugwell, grandparent of third-year camper D.J. Ruffins. "Doctors were brought in and gave campers a lot of supplies and equipment for their asthma that they wouldn't have otherwise gotten. Every year, D.J. meets new friends and has a lot of fun. He has so much fun here that he is always bringing new kids to camp who also need help with their asthma."

Without the help of our sponsors, we could not have made Camp Superstuff a success. A special thanks goes to United Way Silicon Valley who helped provide scholarships for campers in need. We would also like to recognize the Steps to a Healthier Santa Clara County project, Blue Cross of California and The Health Trust for their generous support of the agency's program.

Avoiding Back to School Attacks...

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flu season around the corner, it is also recommended that children receive a flu vaccine to avoid this common asthma trigger.

A number of studies have shown that such plans can effectively reduce the impact the disease has on children. A recent study appearing in the *Cochrane Library*, an international organization that evaluates medical research, children with asthma who have a written action plan experience 27% fewer asthma-related emergency room visits than children who only use a peak-flow meter to monitor their condition.

Parents with questions about how to best ensure that their child's asthma is not affecting them at school can contact Breathe California. We can walk parents through sample asthma action plans to explain the type of information that should be conveyed to school and after-school staff. We can also provide pointers on how to approach teachers and child-care providers about concerns surrounding a child's asthma. In addition, we are always happy to talk about various asthma management techniques to help their child lead a healthier life.

For more information call (408) 998-5865 or visit www.lungsrus.org. We hope you will also consider joining us at our next PAC meeting (see page 3).

Join Us for Our Summer PAC Meeting!!!

Parents of Asthmatic Children (PAC) meetings are held as resources and support groups for families who must confront asthma regularly. At these meetings, we discuss a number of issues related to your child's asthma, including the latest and most relevant news, legislation and asthma management techniques. Parents also have the opportunity to ask questions and network with other families to help their children lead fuller and healthier lives.

Our fall meeting will focus on strategies to protect your children from asthma symptoms as the school year starts back up. We'll cover important management strategies, asthma action plans for schools, ways to communicate with teachers and childcare providers and much more. Dinner will be provided and children are invited to attend. We hope you will join us!

When: Thursday, September 21, 2006
6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Where: Washington Elementary School
100 Oak St, Room 62
San Jose, CA 95110

Topic: Everything You Need to Know About Managing Your Child's Asthma During the Back-to-School-Season

Please RSVP by Wed. September 20th to Joseph Francis at joseph@lungsrus.org or (408) 998-5865.

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Join Breathe California This Fall at the Breath of Life Walk!



Ready, Set, Go! Our annual fundraising walk is back - and just like our agency, it has a new name!

After organizing the local Asthma Walk for the past 4 years, the agency is gearing up to host its newly-named Breath of Life Walk on Saturday September 23rd. Once again taking place at West Valley College in Saratoga, the leisurely 5K (3.1 mile) walk will bring the community together to raise money for critical lung disease prevention, education, research and patient assistance programs. In addition, this year Breathe California is proud to announce that 100% of the proceeds from this year's walk will remain in our local community

"Over the years the community has really come together to support our local walk," said Steve French, Breathe California's Development Director. "It's really quite

something to see doctors, nurses, emphysema patients, kids with asthma and even employees from our corporate sponsors come out and raise money for our local agency."

Walkers who raise funds will not only aid efforts to fight lung disease, but will also qualify for a number of prizes including gift certificates, travel mugs and sports fleeces. The event will also feature food catered by Fresh Choice, music provided by KFOX as well as a number of booths and raffle prizes.

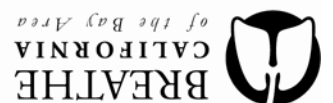
Learn more by visiting www.BreathofLifeWalk.org. There, you can sign up, make a donation, collect pledges and check your fundraising progress online. Or call (408) 998-5865 to request a walk registration packet. Form a team of friends, co-workers and family members, and help make a difference in the lives of local lung disease patients!

The Breath of Life Walk is proudly sponsored by:



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