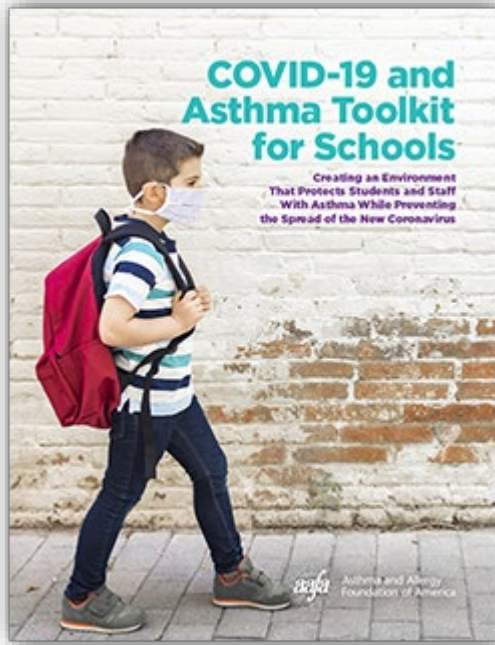




AAFA Unveils “COVID-19 and Asthma Toolkit for Schools”

A Resource to Help Schools Manage Asthma Throughout the COVID-19 Crisis



Washington D.C., July 1, 2020 — Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America (AAFA) released a comprehensive guide, the “[COVID-19 and Asthma Toolkit for Schools](#)” to help educators and families of children living with asthma navigate best methods to stay healthy for those returning to classrooms during the COVID-19 pandemic. New policies to help reduce coronavirus spread could impact children and staff with asthma. AAFA wants to make sure schools required to reopen are equipped with useful tools to meet an unparalleled challenge.

“The back-to-school season is already fraught with an uptick in asthma-related hospitalizations for students and staff returning to academic settings each fall due to increased exposure to asthma triggers like ragweed pollen and dust or mold inside of school buildings. Respiratory viruses also tend to climb in the fall when schools reopen. The increase in asthma episodes and attacks is so significant this period has been dubbed

‘Asthma Peak’ weeks or the ‘September Asthma Epidemic,’” explained AAFA CEO and President, Kenneth Mendez. “We want to make sure students and staff with asthma who must return to schools have their condition under control because they’ll be facing a seasonal asthma epidemic on top of a major viral pandemic at the same time.”

About 20 million adults and nearly 6 million children in the U.S. are living with asthma. An average classroom of 30 students will have about three students with asthma. Asthma is the leading cause of missed work and school days. It’s so serious in fact, that about 10 Americans die each day from asthma. That’s nearly 3600 preventable deaths per year even before a global pandemic.

“With the dangers of COVID-19, schools are faced with developing logistical solutions they’ve never had to consider before. Outside of virtual learning programs, making schools more asthma friendly can help protect an already vulnerable population and reduce the spread of the new coronavirus,” said AAFA Director of Education, Lorene Alba. “COVID-19 disease prevention strategies can possibly create more asthma triggers inside of schools. Regular exposure to triggers can increase asthma symptoms which is something we want to avoid.”

AAFA’s “COVID-19 and Asthma Toolkit for Schools” creates a roadmap for:

- Identifying new COVID-19 school policies that could impact students and staff with asthma
- Creating asthma friendly school spaces that can also help prevent the spread of coronavirus
- Specific COVID-19 protocols for school nurses and staff managing asthma



- Developing individual asthma management plans for each student including having extra medicines and tools on-hand during emergencies like the COVID-19 pandemic

“More than half of U.S. children with asthma have one or more attacks each year. Even students with mild symptoms can have life-threatening episodes. School is where most of our children spend their time. Improving the school environment often serves as a first line of defense when it comes to helping to identify, manage, and control the risks of asthma,” said Melanie Carver, AAFA’s Chief Mission Officer. “AAFA has always been a leading advocate for the best public policies supporting people with asthma inside of our schools. We give recommendations through our [State Honor Roll of Asthma and Allergy Policies for Schools](#) report to help states and schools make significant improvements to protect our kids’ health. Coronavirus could change the landscape of how schools function for years to come. Hopefully our schools toolkit will not only help school districts face the immediate crisis of the pandemic but adapt some of these strategies long term.”

AAFA’s “COVID-19 and Asthma Toolkit for Schools” is available online at aafa.org/schools-covid19.

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About AAFA

Founded in 1953, AAFA is the oldest and largest non-profit patient organization dedicated to saving lives and reducing the burden of disease for people with asthma, allergies and related conditions through research, education, advocacy and support. AAFA offers extensive support for individuals and families affected by asthma and allergic diseases, such as food allergies and atopic dermatitis (eczema). Through its online patient support communities, network of local chapters and affiliated support groups, AAFA empowers patients and their families by providing practical, evidence-based information and community programs and services. AAFA is the only asthma and allergy patient advocacy group that is certified to meet the standards of excellence set by the National Health Council. For more information, visit www.aafa.org.