



**2017 Advisory #33:
Health Department reminds health care providers to help children prepare for the fall asthma season**

September 14, 2017

Childhood asthma often worsens in the fall, coinciding with the start of the school year. **Health care providers can help prevent asthma exacerbations, hospital visits and school absences by optimizing asthma management in children now.**

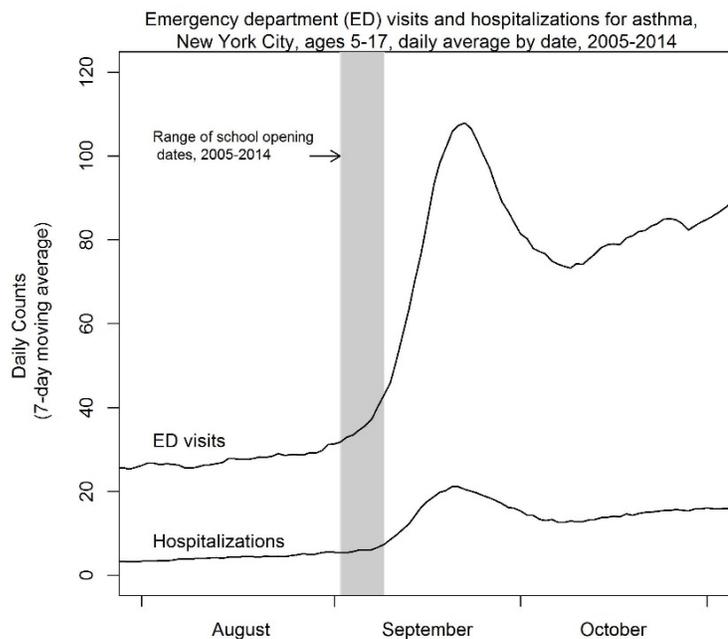
- Schedule a visit for children with asthma to review symptom frequency, adjust medications and develop or update a written asthma action plan.
- Prescribe inhaled corticosteroids for children with persistent asthma.
- Complete an Asthma Medication Administration Form for school-aged children.
- Review asthma triggers and discuss avoidance strategies.
- Administer influenza vaccine.

Dear Colleagues:

Each fall, child asthma hospitalizations and emergency department visits surge, **with emergency department visits nearly five times higher than summertime lows, peaking about two weeks after public schools open** (Figure 1). A medical regimen that achieves symptom control during the summer months may not effectively prevent exacerbations related to fall asthma triggers. Authorizing in-school administration of asthma medications can improve asthma symptoms.¹

As school opens this fall, medical providers should:

- Schedule a visit to evaluate patients' current asthma symptoms and adjust therapy accordingly.
 - Use your electronic health record system (EHR) to generate patient outreach lists and create asthma-specific order sets.
- Prescribe inhaled corticosteroids to children with [persistent asthma](#).²



- Create or update an [Asthma Action Plan](#).
- Complete an [Asthma Medication Administration Form](#) (MAF) for school-aged children. **School health staff can only administer asthma medications when authorized with a signed MAF.**
 - Authorize albuterol administration for all school-aged children with asthma.
 - Authorize administration of inhaled corticosteroids for patients with poorly controlled asthma and with adherence problems.
 - If you have questions about school services for children with asthma, email OSH@health.nyc.gov.
- Review [asthma triggers](#) and discuss avoidance strategies.
- [Administer influenza vaccine](#) annually and discuss the importance of prompt treatment of influenza.

Thank you,

Amita Toprani

Amita Toprani, MD, MPH
Medical Director
Bureau of Environmental Disease & Injury Prevention

Cheryl Lawrence

Cheryl Lawrence, MD
Medical Director
Office of School Health

References

1. Halterman, J.S., et al., Randomized Controlled Trial to Improve Care for Urban Children With Asthma: Results of the School-Based Asthma Therapy Trial. *Arch Pediatr Adolesc Med*, 2011. 165(3): p. 262-268.
2. National Asthma Education and Prevention Program: Expert panel report III: Guidelines for the diagnosis and management of asthma. National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute; 2007. Available at <http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/guidelines/asthma/asthgdln.htm>.

To explore neighborhood-level asthma rates among public school children, visit the [Environment & Health Data Portal](#).