

## Caring for Youth with Asthma During the COVID-19 Outbreak

May 13th, 2020



Asthma is the most common chronic illness in children and teens. Youth with asthma are at higher risk of serious complications if they develop an infection with COVID-19. As we take other precautions to protect against the virus (such as social distancing, hand washing and surface cleaning) we can help protect youth with asthma by taking these steps:

- 1. Understand the risks regarding COVID-19 and asthma** – Like other respiratory viruses, the novel coronavirus causes inflammation and mucus production in the lungs. In people with asthma, this can result in severe wheezing, pneumonia and trouble breathing.
- 2. Maximize asthma control to prevent complications of COVID-19** – Now more than ever, it is crucial that youth with asthma take their preventative medications as prescribed. These medications are taken every day to control asthma symptoms and prevent more serious asthma attacks. Controller medications include inhaled steroids, inhaled long acting bronchodilators, and oral and nasal allergy medications. Youth should also avoid known asthma triggers such as dust, pet dander, smoke and pollen.
- 3. Ensure your child has an updated Asthma Action Plan** – Review your youth's Asthma Action Plan to make sure it contains their current medications and doses. If you do not have an up-to-date Asthma Action Plan, contact your child's medical provider.
- 4. Confirm all asthma medication prescriptions are filled and not expired** – Examine your youth's asthma medications. Make sure both controller medications and rescue medications (albuterol) are not expired and that you have ample supply in case you cannot leave home for a period of time. If refills are needed, contact your pharmacy. Examine your child's spacer (for inhaler use) and/or nebulizer machine. If these are not functional, contact your healthcare provider for a repair or replacement.
- 5. Check to confirm your healthcare provider is available during this crisis** – Some health providers have closed their offices or limited patient visits due to the COVID-19 outbreak. It is important to know how to access medical care should your youth become ill or develop an asthma exacerbation. If their healthcare professional is not available, identify a provider who will be accessible if needed. Many medical centers are offering Tele-visits and are accepting new patients during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**For more information visit:**

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

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