



Ask About Asthma Campaign 14th – 20th September 2020

The [Healthy London Partnership](#) Children and Young People's programme are running their fourth [#AskAboutAsthma](#) campaign with NHS England (London) from **14th to 20th September** to raise awareness of the three simple measures that should be taken to manage all children and young people (CYP) with asthma.

The campaign will be carried out via social media, specifically Twitter and will be using the following hashtag:

[#AskAboutAsthma](#)

How common is asthma amongst children and young people?

Asthma affects 10% of the children and young people population (three in every classroom) and accounts for the most significant proportion of A&E attendance and admissions. It is thought that up to 75% of admissions for asthma are avoidable.

Part of the solution to enable CYP to live their lives without restriction is to raise awareness of how we can support families to get the support they need before need escalates. In addition ensuring CYP and their families understand the three simple actions required to manage their asthma effectively.

Three simple measures to help children and young people with asthma

Three simple measures to manage all children and young people (CYP) with asthma are:

A **written asthma action plan** drawn up between a clinician and child with asthma means they four times less likely to have to go to hospital for their asthma. 'Only 28-48% of CYP with asthma in London have an asthma plan' - Healthy London Partnership

The plan should have information on triggers; what the medicines do (preventers/and relievers); how and when to take treatment; current treatment; how to spot asthma getting worse (symptoms and peak expiratory flow); what treatment to take in an emergency; how and when to call for help.

Whittington Health have produced an **asthma plan** for children and young people and adults that fits in your wallet. When printed out, double sided, it folds up into a credit card size shape (a little thicker than 1 credit card).

Using inhalers effectively: less than $\frac{3}{4}$ of CYP have any form of instruction in how to use their inhalers – meaning they may not be getting the full benefit of their asthma medication

The Hands-on Guide to Practical Paediatrics team has put together instructional videos on how to use different inhalers:



[How to use a metered dose inhaler \(MDI\) with a volumatic spacer](#)



[How to use a Turbuhaler](#)



[How to use an Accuhaler](#)



[How to use an Easi-Breathe inhaler](#)

The Hands-on Guide to Practical Paediatrics team has also developed an instructional video on [How to give inhalers to a young child or baby](#).

An annual asthma review to ensure effective management of the condition. Doing a thorough asthma review takes at least 20 minutes and should be a combination of clinical assessment and patient education. The child's asthma plan should be reviewed and inhaler technique should be checked.



[Whittington annual review leaflet](#)

Back to School and helping children and young people with asthma

Our School Nurses are the key health professionals who can support children and young people with asthma and long term medical conditions to attend school. Camden School Nurses have recently received additional training to provide extra support to children with medical conditions who will be returning to school this term and we will be working closely with schools to identify asthmatic children at the beginning of the school year.

We can support children with managing their triggers, provide reassurance by supporting the child and school to manage their medication on the school site and follow their care plan. We will ensure that each child with asthma has had a health assessment by the Camden Asthma and Atopy Nurse Specialist that we work in partnership together so that children and young people's health needs are met in school.

We will ensure that school staff receive asthma advice and training, which will include what to do in an emergency, and deliver positive health messages to openly manage asthma in

schools and raise the understanding of all children and young people so that the risk of stigma or bullying is reduced.

We will utilise school immunisations sessions as key contact opportunities to raise asthma awareness with young people in school when they attend, and will identify asthmatic children through our pre-immunisation questions. Nurses will ask the three “Ask me about asthma” campaign questions, which are “have got your medication?” “Do you have care plan in school?” and “have you had an asthma review?” We will ensure that young people know where their inhaler is on the day and know how to use an aero chamber.

We will be hosting asthma-themed school health drop-ins during September. We will also give advice to schools on how to become an asthma friendly school and we will follow up every A&E attendance by a child or young person which is related to asthma.

An information pack has been sent to schools outlining the Camden School Nursing Service offer and this includes information about the 2020 “Ask me About Asthma Campaign”. Each school has an allocated Link Nurse who will be meeting with each school to discuss the school nursing offer. We encourage schools and families to inform us about any support they might require for individual children who have a medical condition including asthma.

With regards to Covid-19 we will be offering advice for family health issues, clinical support to schools to perform risk assessments, and specific information to support children and their families who have been shielding.

Our Asthma Community Nurse supports children and their family following a diagnosis of asthma or if they are finding it hard to manage their symptoms. The Community Nurse works as a link between the GP and secondary care by spending time and offering support to make sure:

- The family and the child understand the diagnosis of asthma and can answer any questions they may have
- The child is on the right medications and is using them correctly
- The child and family understand the asthma plan and when to seek medical help
- Any social factors that may be affecting control of their asthma are assessed

These steps should help towards managing a child’s asthma better and lead to an improved quality of life. However, despite these steps asthma can be difficult to manage at times leading to hospital admissions or recurrent symptoms. If a child or young person’s asthma remains difficult to manage then the Asthma Community Nurse will make referral to see them in hospital alongside a consultant, where treatment can be reviewed and a plan made to lead to better controlled asthma.

If you feel a child/young person does not fully understand their diagnosis of asthma or their asthma could be better controlled then a referral can be made to the Asthma Community Nurse via the GP, practice nurse, school nurse or hospital nurse/doctor.

Further Resources for schools and children and young people

Schools – The Asthma Innovation Research (AIR) education project is a highly successful asthma awareness scheme in schools, launched by two medical students at UCL Medical School in 2012. Medical students are trained to go into schools and provide a fun and interactive session to teach children all about asthma. So far, the programme is set up in UCL, Cardiff, Kings College London and Imperial medical schools.

Contact

jonny.coppel@gmail.com to find out more.

Resources for Children and young people from Asthma Innovation Research - Princess Asma & the Asmanauts



'Asthmanauts' and 'Princess Asma' were created with the purpose of producing a comic style booklets for children to improve their understanding and hopefully their management of their asthma.

Free copies of the comics can be downloaded from:

<https://www.asthmainnovationresearch.co.uk/princess-asma>

