



NEWS from Trudell Medical International

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For kids with asthma, Back to School may also mean Back to the ER

Asthma is the most common respiratory disease in Canadian children. Asthma is responsible for one-quarter of school absenteeism and is the leading cause of hospitalizations of children up to the age of 14. Statistics show there is a 200% surge in hospital visits in the third week of September – commonly referred to as the *September Spike* epidemic.¹

September Spike is likely the result of viral infections spreading from child-to-child in the classroom, and then being transported home to other family members. Children with asthma are at a higher risk of contracting respiratory diseases, such as pneumonia and bronchitis, than the general population.² Having good asthma control for the entire year is one way of helping to minimize the effect of the September Spike epidemic.

50% of patients use their inhalation devices inappropriately, reducing the effectiveness of their medication.³

Asthma is commonly treated with Metered Dose Inhalers (MDIs) also known as “puffers”. A puffer contains a combination of medication and propellant that carries the medication to the lungs. To be effective, the puffer needs to be pressed during inhalation so the medication is inhaled into the lungs, rather than being trapped in the mouth or throat. Physicians often recommend the use of a valved holding chamber to facilitate effective delivery of the medication, deep into the lungs, and with fewer side effects.⁴

The Canadian based manufacturer of the popular *AeroChamber*[®] Brand of Valved Holding Chambers have developed two new chambers to meet the needs of the youth market. The new *AC Girlz*[™] and *AC Boyz*[™] Chambers feature kid-friendly designs and have built-in feedback mechanisms that encourage proper inhaler/chamber technique. These features may empower kids to take greater control of their asthma and encourage independence and compliance to their treatment program and are ideal for kids prescribed a puffer for the first time. This is especially important in an age category known to either ignore their medication or use it incorrectly. Children are at particular risk of having poor asthma control because they are less likely to recognize asthma as a serious threat. A recent study of students with asthma indicated that they saw taking their inhaled medication as inconvenient, undesirable and unnecessary.⁵ In fact, 53% of patients do not recognize that asthma attacks can be fatal even when their disease is mild.⁶ “Children may be more likely to be influenced by social factors than the reality of their condition.” says Dr. Alan Kaplan, Chair of the Family Physician Airways Group of Canada, “Development of a child-friendly treatment program, designed just for them, empowers them to take greater control of their symptoms and may help increase the likelihood that they take their medication consistently – and effectively.

I recommend the use of a chamber for my patients who are prescribed puffers, to increase the therapeutic benefit they receive and to minimize side-effects. These new chambers are great for parents who would like to give their kids more independence, without giving up the peace-of-mind they had when administering the drugs themselves.”

Providing kids with a tailored Asthma Action Plan encourages them to take greater control of their asthma, enabling them to live healthy, active lives.



1 Johnston NW, Johnston SL, Norman GR, Dai J, Sears MR. The September epidemic of asthma hospitalization: School children as disease vectors. *Journal of Clinical Immunology*, Mars 2006; 117(3): 557–562. 2 To T, Dell S, Dick P, Cicutto L, Harris J, Tassoudji M, Duong-Hua M. Burden of Childhood Asthma. Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences, Toronto, Ontario; Mai 2004. 3 Boulet LP, Becker A, Be rube D, Beveridge R, Ernst P. Canadian Asthma Consensus Report, 1999. Canadian Asthma Consensus Group. *Can Med Assoc J*. 1999;161(11 Suppl):S1-61. 4 Salzman GA, Pyszczynski DR. Oropharyngeal candidiasis in patients treated with beclomethasone dipropionate delivered by metered-dose inhaler alone and with Aerochamber. *The Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology*, 1988;81 (2):424-428. 5 Salzman GA, Pyszczynski DR. Oropharyngeal candidiasis in patients treated with beclomethasone dipropionate delivered by metered-dose inhaler alone and with Aerochamber. *The Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology*, 1988;81 (2):424-428. 6 Ayala GX, Miller D, Zagami E, Riddle C, Willis S et King D. Asthma in Middle Schools: What Students Have to Say About Their Asthma. *Journal of School Health*, Août 2006; 76(6): 208-214

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