

MEDIA RELEASE

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Young asthma sufferers - stay safe in the cold



As half term hits and hundreds of children head for the outdoors parents and carers are being asked to keep an eye on their little ones if they have asthma.

One in 11 children has asthma and it is the most common long-term medical condition with children under the age of five accounting for the highest number of attendances to A&E. In reality a child is admitted to hospital every 20 minutes because of an asthma attack.

Cold weather is a major trigger for asthma symptoms. But a few simple precautions can help to avoid a child being admitted to hospital.

Dr Vaiyapuri Raja from NHS Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), said:
“Hospital admissions for asthma traditionally peak during periods of particularly cold weather. This can also be due to breathing cold air into the lungs which can in turn trigger asthma.

“Risks also increase as children with asthma pick up colds and flu which circulate more during the winter months.

“Another reason is that during the colder weather, many of us stay indoors, which makes us susceptible to inhaling house asthma triggers like mould, pet dander, house mites and open fires. Following this, when they step outdoors, an attack could be triggered.

“Children whose asthma is well-controlled are more likely to be able to withstand the risks of winter and avoid having to spend any time in hospital.”

Tips on keeping asthma under control include making sure your child has a regular asthma review with your doctor or asthma nurse. If prescribed, taking regular preventer medicine is vital. Making sure children wrap up well and wear a scarf loosely over their nose and mouth – this will help to warm up the air before breathing it in and making sure your child has their inhaler with them and that they are using it in the correct way.

There is a raft of support available to parents and carers who want to increase their awareness about asthma. The organisation - Supporting Children’s Health – has produced an Asthma Module aimed at raising awareness of the condition and how to manage it.

Dr Raja continues: “Having a better understanding of the condition and its triggers can help to ensure children with asthma in your care are safe and can get involved in the same activities as any other child without issue or harm.”

To access the Asthma module go to:

<https://www.supportingchildrenshealth.org/asthma-module/>

If you or your child feels unwell visit your pharmacist or call NHS 111. For more information on staying well this winter visit www.nhs.uk/staywell

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