

ASK THE EXPERT

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Question:

What are some asthma school resources?

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Resources for Schools

A number of asthma resources are available for schools. In fact, there are resources designed for use by classroom teachers, physical education teachers, the health suite, and even the school bus driver. The federal government, including the National Institutes of Health National Asthma Education Prevention Program (NAEPP), the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) maintain many of these resources, but there are also many helpful resources available from other sources.

The NIH National Asthma Control Initiative (<https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health-pro/resources/lung/naci/audiences/schools-childcare.htm>) offers 10 tips that schools and childcare settings can follow to improve their ability to help children with asthma. NAEPP has a very useful booklet for schools, *Managing Asthma: A Guide for Schools*, updated in 2014 (<https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health-pro/resources/lung/managing-asthma-guide-schools-2014-edition-html>). This helpful booklet explains the importance of asthma management to schools and provides information for schools to develop an effective program to manage asthma. It includes action items to assist schools in helping children with asthma. It even provides suggested roles and responsibilities for various staff, from the bus driver to the principal. This booklet would be a great starting place for school personnel interested in helping their school deal effectively with children who have asthma.

Creating Healthy Indoor Air Quality in Schools (<https://www.epa.gov/iaq-schools>) provides schools with best practices and how healthy indoor air quality can improve students' academic performance.

Meet the Expert:



Mona Tsoukleris, MS, PharmD

Mona Tsoukleris is a clinical pharmacist and associate professor at University of Maryland School of Pharmacy. She has served as an asthma educator in adult pulmonology and pediatric allergy practices, served on the Maryland Asthma Control Program and has taught pharmacists and other health professionals regarding asthma pharmacotherapy and device use.

Mona currently serves on the AAE Board of Directors and is working on the Annual Conference Committee.



Healthy Schools, Healthy Kids (<https://www.epa.gov/schools>) also provides resources that will help schools improve building health.

School systems administrators will find the CDC book, *Strategies for Addressing Asthma Within a Coordinated School Health Program* (www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/asthma/pdf/strategies.pdf), very helpful. CDC also maintains an asthma resource list which includes links to a wide variety of asthma resources useful to schools (<https://www.cdc.gov/asthma/schools.html>).

Is your school an “*Asthma Friendly School?*” If not, check out the American Lung Association’s site to learn what your school can do to get that designation. (<http://www.lung.org/lung-health-and-diseases/lung-disease-lookup/asthma/asthma-education-advocacy/asthma-friendly-schools-initiative/>). The CDC has a *Creating an Asthma Friendly School Toolkit* (<https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/asthma/creatingafs/index.htm>). NIH also has a *How Asthma Friendly is Your School?* checklist which is also available in Spanish (<https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/resources/lung/asthma-friendly/>).

The American Lung Association *Open Airways for Schools* (<http://www.lung.org/lung-health-and-diseases/lung-disease-lookup/asthma/asthma-education-advocacy/open-airways-for-schools/>) program teaches elementary age children about asthma self-management. Your school can invite a trained facilitator to teach the program on site or can make arrangements for a member of school staff to become a trained facilitator so the program can be an ongoing activity.

If you have not yet looked, check out your local and state health departments and regional asthma alliance web sites to see what they have to offer. Many health departments provide rich resources for asthma information and tools useful to schools. For example, you will likely find a copy of the state’s recommended Asthma Action Plan for use in schools as well as health forms that will be helpful when it is time for kids to return to school. One great example is the Asthma Initiative of Michigan site (<http://getastmahelp.org/teacher.aspx>). There you will find *Actions for the Classroom Teacher* that includes an asthma action plan, lesson plans, clinical information about asthma, and information on how to work with families affected by asthma, among other resources.

Resources for Classroom Teachers

Teachers can help their students learn about environmental issues important in asthma. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) maintains a site helpful to K-12 teachers (<https://www.epa.gov/students>). Teachers will find instructional materials and numerous resources to improve student knowledge about the environment and health. Available lesson plans include *Creating Healthy Indoor Air Quality in Schools*, *Particulate Matter Air Sensor Kits*, and *Basic Ozone Layer Science* (<https://www.epa.gov/students/lesson-plans-teacher-guides-and-online-resources-educators>). Several additional lesson plans are available that would be worthwhile to advance knowledge at the same time as being fun, like *Asthma Triggers: Gain Control* (<https://www.epa.gov/asthma/asthma-triggers-gain-control>) which provides useful information in brief segments with links to additional asthma related resources. The EPA site is so rich in resources, it would be impossible to review all they have



available here. Type “asthma” in the site’s search function and see the large number of additional useful resources.

Pedipress, (http://www.pedipress.com/school_main.html) a site developed by Dr. Tom Plaut, offers multiple resources useful to schools. Information from his book, *Asthma at School*, is available on the site and includes guidelines for teachers and staff, legal aspects, asthma emergency guides, individualized health plans, and *The Asthma Learning Tool for Teachers*.

Resources for Physical Education Teachers & Coaches

NIH has produced a helpful guide for teachers, coaches and physical education teachers, *Asthma and Physical Activity in the School: Making a Difference* (<https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/resources/lung/asthma-physical-activity-html>). This guide provides information about asthma and how it can be managed while encouraging physical activity in children. A “must review” training program for coaches is the 30 minute training program, *Winning with Asthma* program (<http://www.winningwithasthma.org/>). The program includes informational videos by coaches.

Resources for Health Suites

In addition to many of the resources previously listed, the National Association of School Nurses (NASN) has a *School Nurse Asthma Care Checklist* for school nurses, clinical guidelines, information on use of pulse oximeters, and other resources (<http://www.nasn.org/ToolsResources/Asthma>). NASN offers training programs relevant to asthma for school nurses.

CDC’s School & Childcare Providers page (<http://www.cdc.gov/asthma/schools.html>), includes links and information on proper inhaler use, protocols for student self-administration of inhalers, and emergency protocols for asthma management.

The Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America (<http://www.aafa.org/page/asthma-allergy-education-programs.aspx>) offers educational resources, including continuing education opportunities for health professionals.

The American Academy of Allergy Asthma and Immunology (AAAAI) offers *School Tools for asthma and Anaphylaxis* (<http://www.aaaai.org/conditions-and-treatments/school-tools>) as well as SAMPRO™ (*School Based Asthma Management Program*) as well as allergy & asthma resources for professionals.

School nurses should consider membership in the Association of Asthma Educators. The Association offers many member resources useful to schools including a list of asthma coalitions, training webinars, a list of companies offering prescription assistance programs, *How To* guides for proper use of inhalation devices, a list of *Must Read Research Studies* coordinated by the Healthy Schools Network, and a *Healthy Schools Back to School Toolkit* that contains information on “green cleaning”, pest management, indoor air quality, and other useful resources.

