

# Asthma Adventures



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## 'Tis the Season.....For Asthma???

Does your child's asthma get worse on those cold and windy days? How about when snuggled close to the fireplace or while playing near the Christmas tree?

For many children, asthma does not take a holiday in the winter season. Certain triggers and activities during the winter can cause problems for children with asthma. But that does not mean they should stop doing their favorite activities. **Children with asthma can and should stay active all winter.**

### Follow these tips to keep asthma in control while enjoying this winter season. Be sure your child:

- Uses **Controller** medicine regularly as prescribed even when feeling well.
- Follows their **Asthma Action Plan** to prevent and manage worsening asthma.
- Stays active outside on those not so cold days. If exercise is a trigger, he or she can use **Reliever** medicine 10-15 minutes before heading out.
- Has a scarf or neck warmer covering the mouth and nose. This warms and adds moisture to the cold dry air which can trigger asthma.
- Washes their hands frequently to prevent the spread of cold viruses!!!
- Stays away from smoke from candles, fireplaces, or wood burning stoves. These can trigger asthma. Fireplace doors should be kept closed. A gas fireplace would be a better option. Store firewood outside.

### Parents! Remember:



- Be aware of strong smells from scented candles, pot pourri, and other decorations.
- The holiday tree can leave some children coughing and wheezing. Artificial trees are a great alternative.
- When entertaining use serving utensils for bowls of nuts and candy to help prevent spreading colds and flu bugs.
- Keep pets out of the bedroom and out of the house if possible.
- Keep the humidity inside your home below 50% to prevent dust mite and mold growth.
- **Never allow smoking in your house or car !!! Ask smokers to smoke outside even on those colder days.**

It may be a great time to sign yourself, your child, or your teen up for asthma education classes. Classes will be held at the Children's Asthma Education Centre starting again in January 2008. See the back of this issue for dates and times.

# Second Hand Smoke and Asthma



Secondhand smoke (SHS), or Environmental Tobacco Smoke (ETS), is a serious health hazard for everyone! It is also a very common asthma trigger. Anyone breathing SHS may experience a runny nose, eye irritation, sneezing, headaches, and coughing. SHS is especially dangerous to babies and children because they have smaller airways, breathe faster, and are more prone to illnesses. For children with asthma, it is particularly troublesome. Regular exposure to SHS makes a child more likely to develop asthma, makes asthma worse in children who already have asthma, leads to lung and ear infections, and is linked to sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). **Children exposed to cigarette smoke have more colds.**

SHS is made up of thousands of toxic chemicals which can make children and adults sick. There are more of some of the harmful substances in SHS than there is in the smoke inhaled by smokers.

Babies and children can be exposed to SHS in their own homes, in baby sitters' homes, in cars, or in public places. Unborn babies can be exposed when their mothers are in smoky environments. SHS has been linked to premature births and miscarriages. There is no safe level of SHS. Smoking in any room in the home, in the car, and smoke odor on clothing, skin, and hair from SHS can cause asthma symptoms. Studies have shown that children with asthma who are exposed to SHS need more asthma medicines, have more emergency room visits, and have lower lung function. Studies also show SHS may be a major factor in the development of asthma in children under 5 years.

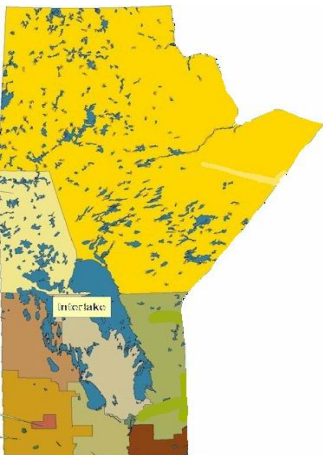
**The good news is that SHS exposure is avoidable!  
A smoke free environment is the only way to ensure protection for your family.**

*If you smoke, the best option for you and your child is to quit.*

To safeguard your child or teen from the toxic effects of SHS:

- Never allow smoking in your home. Tobacco smoke clings to clothes, hair, furniture, carpets, windows, and walls. Smoking in another room still allows SHS to drift under doors, vents, and even electrical outlets.
- Have friends and family members smoke outside.
- Keep your car smoke free. The amount of smoke in a closed car is 23 times more toxic than in a smoky room.
- Stay away from places where smoking is allowed.
- Opening a window, using an air purifier/filter or smoking in another room is **not** effective in removing harmful gases from the environment.

**KEEP YOUR CHILD'S ASTHMA UNDER CONTROL BY  
ELIMINATING EXPOSURE TO SECOND HAND SMOKE!!!**



## WHAT'S NEW IN PROVINCIAL OUTREACH?

The Children's Asthma Education Centre is working hard to initiate and evaluate the school based asthma education program, the "Roaring Adventures of Puff" (RAP). We hope to see this program running in a number of schools in Winnipeg, Churchill, Beausejour, and the Assiniboine RHA this winter. For further information about the RAP program or other asthma educational services available in Manitoba please contact:

**Lesley Stewart RN, CAE**

**Provincial Outreach Asthma Coordinator**

**Phone: 1 (204) 787-1293 or our toll free # 1-888-554-1141**

**Email: [lestewart@hsc.mb.ca](mailto:lestewart@hsc.mb.ca)**

## TEEN classes



## ASTHMA EDUCATION FOR TEENS

Recently, the CAEC offered our “Teens Talk Asthma: Taking Control” program. The program offers teens the opportunity to learn more about their asthma and how to control it. Teens met once a week for 3 weeks where they learned skills needed to make sure asthma does not get in the way of their lives. During the 3 classes, the teens learned to take more responsibility for their asthma and developed self-management skills to better control their asthma. Best of all, they developed new friendships with other teens in the class. With the largest group of teens ever registered, 11 out of the 12 teens graduated from the “Teens Talk Asthma: Taking Control” program. We wish all of them success with their asthma control!

## Asthma Education in the Doctor’s Office

Certified Asthma Educators from the Children’s Asthma Education Centre continue to meet families at their doctor’s office to provide education about managing asthma.

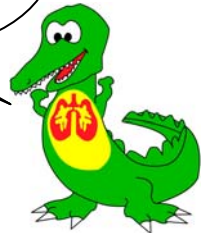
Families who participate in this program are referred by their doctor. The asthma educator then contacts the family to arrange a time to meet at their doctor’s office. The asthma educator and the family meet 3 times over the next 6 months.

During the visit, the asthma educator will:

- Check your child’s asthma control.
- Explain what happens in the lungs and how to know if the asthma is controlled.
- Discuss and answer questions about your child’s triggers and medicines.
- Talk to your doctor about an Asthma Action Plan for your child.
- Give you and your child printed information about asthma such as an asthma booklet, coloring sheets, crossword puzzles, and a craft on how to make healthy and asthmatic airways.

We have enjoyed meeting with the many wonderful families and their physicians. Surveys continue to show that both parents and children enjoy this one to one approach to asthma education. If you have any questions about this project, please call Cathy Gillespie at 787-2551.

Learning about  
asthma is fun!



## THANK YOU NIKKI PLESIUK

Nikki has been volunteering in our School Age classes, helping with the groups of children learning to manage their asthma. She has been a great asset to our department since September and plans to continue on for the winter season. Nikki, who has asthma herself since she was a childhood, is now a student at the University of Manitoba in Respiratory Therapy.





**Happy Holidays**  
*from the*  
**Children's Asthma Education Centre Team**

*Allan Becker*

*Nestor Cisneros*

*Cathy Gillespie*

*Shauna Filuk*

*Jo-Anne St. Vincent*

*Lesley Stewart*

*Sheila Bughao*

*Bev Kulbaba*

*Isabel Gardziel*

**FREE**

**Upcoming Asthma Education Classes**

The Children's Asthma Education Centre offers classes to families affected by asthma. The classes are separated into 4 groups: Less than 3 years of age, Preschool, School Age, and Teens. The following is a schedule of classes:

*Remember to call early as registration is limited!*

**Less Than 3 Years: (parents of children under 3 years old)**

February 12 & February 19, 2008	Two Tuesdays, from 7:00 pm to 8:30 pm
April 28 & May 5, 2008	Two Mondays, from 7:00 pm to 8:30 pm

**Preschool: (parents of 3-6 year olds)**

February 20 to March 5, 2008	Three Wednesdays, from 7:00pm to 8:30pm
April 10 to April 24, 2008	Three Thursdays, from 7:00pm to 8:30pm

**School Age: (parents and children 7-11 years old)**

January 24 to February 7, 2008	Three Thursdays, from 7:00 pm to 8:30pm
March 3 to March 17, 2008	Three Mondays, from 7:00 pm to 8:30pm
April 30 to May 14, 2008	Three Wednesdays, from 7:00 pm to 8:30pm

**Teens: (teens 12-16 years old)**

April 8 to April 22, 2008	Three Tuesdays, from 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm
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**For more class information, please call (204) 787-2551.**

*Did you know that children and families who have graduated from the Family Asthma Program have fewer emergency room visits and hospital admissions for asthma? The focus of the classes is to learn asthma self-management. The topics discussed in the sessions are what asthma is, signs of worsening asthma, definition of asthma triggers with discussion of avoidance and control strategies, use of an Asthma Action Plan and medicines. After completion of classes, families will have gained the knowledge and skills needed to control their child's asthma.*

**Children's Asthma Education Centre - Mission Statement**

The mission of the Children's Asthma Education Centre is to enhance the health and well being of children who have asthma and their families. We are committed to increasing awareness of asthma and its management; to excellence in educating children, families and health care professionals; and to being a leader in asthma education research.