

24 January 2019

Parents urged to get children asthma ready for school

- **Spikes in asthma flare ups are common when children return to school after the Christmas break, resulting in significant increase in hospitalisations and days off school**
- **Asthma Australia and TerryWhite Chemmart have created a checklist for parents and carers to ensure their children are asthma ready for school**

With spikes in asthma flare ups common after the school holidays, parents and carers around Australia are being urged to put their child's asthma plan at the top of their Back to School list.

According to Asthma Australia, researchers have found that there is a rise in asthma flare-ups when children return to school after the Christmas break, resulting in a significant increase in Emergency Department visits, hospitalisations and days off school.

This year, Asthma Australia and TerryWhite Chemmart have prepared an asthma check list for parents and carers to make sure their child is asthma ready for school.

"The period after Christmas holidays is often ripe for an increase in asthma flare ups - sometimes preventer medicines are not taken daily as prescribed over the summer holidays or children mix with others and there is an inevitable spreading of viruses," said Asthma Australia CEO Michele Goldman.

"In preparation for the return back to school, we are advising parents and carers to review and update their child's Asthma Action Plan with their GP, with support from their local community pharmacist."

TerryWhite Chemmart pharmacist Krystal Tresillian said community pharmacists could provide parents with valuable resources to educate them about treating and managing asthma.

"Pharmacists can educate parents about the proper use of inhalation devices, especially if their children have just been diagnosed and they are feeling uncertain or overwhelmed," she said.

"It's important that parents and their children are thoroughly educated about the condition, so they know their triggers and warning signs for an attack and they know what steps to take."

The 3-Step Asthma Australia and TerryWhite Chemmart Back to School Asthma Checklist

1 – See your doctor for a signed Action Plan or Care Plan. Most schools require an updated plan for each student with asthma at the start of the new school year.

2 – Check with the school about their medication policy and work with staff to find the best way to manage your child's asthma medication, including before physical activity.

3 – Make time to talk with the class teacher and the school nurse about your child's asthma, their asthma plan and their usual triggers, symptoms and medications.

Asthma symptoms:

- Difficulty breathing
- Coughing or wheezing
- Difficulty speaking a full sentence in one breath
- Tightness of the chest

In the event of an asthma flare-up start Asthma First Aid:

- Sit the person upright and reassure them
- Give 4 separate puffs of the blue/grey reliever puffer
- Wait 4 minutes, if no improvement give 4 more puffs of the blue/grey reliever as above
- If there is still no improvement, call an ambulance on 000. Mention that someone is having an asthma flare up and keep repeating the 4 puffs every 4 minutes until the ambulance arrives.

For more information about preparing an asthma management plan, see your local GP or TerryWhite Chemmart pharmacist, visit asthmaustralia.org.au or call **1800 ASTHMA** Helpline (1800 278 462).

ENDS

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About Asthma Australia

For over 50 years Asthma Australia has been the leader in asthma health care, research and support. Asthma Australia delivers evidence-based preventative health strategies to over 500,000 people every year and provides support, training and resources to the primary health care sector. The organisation funds vital basic science and population health research contributing to national and international understandings of asthma and how best to manage the disease.

About TerryWhite Chemmart

Following the merger of Terry White Group and Chemmart in late 2016, TerryWhite Chemmart is now Australia's largest retail pharmacy brand, with approximately 500 stores around the country. TerryWhite Chemmart delivers high-quality, accessible, and cost-effective community-based health care services.