

Contact:
Kevin Volz, MediaSource
614-932-9950
kevin@mediasourcetv.com
Adam Dormuth, National Jewish Health
303-398-1082
dormutha@njhealth.org

AS KIDS GO BACK TO SCHOOL, PARENTS AND DOCTORS BRACE FOR A SURGE OF ASTHMA CASES

80,000 children a day miss school, many just after school starts when conditions are worst

DENVER, CO July 31, 2013 -- 13-year old Serenity Williams-Fregia loves school, but dreads the start of it. Like seven million other children in the U.S., Serenity has asthma, and shortly after classes start, so do her breathing problems.

"It happens every year, I always get sick. Very sick, actually, and I feel like just as school begins, I'm already falling behind," she said.

Serenity is not alone. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, children with asthma miss a combined 14.4 million school days a year, which is about 80,000 a day. Many of those occur just after school begins when conditions are at their worst.

"This time of year, it's a perfect storm to set many kids up for asthma attacks," said [Kirstin Carel, MD](#), a pediatric allergist at [National Jewish Health](#) in Denver. "You've got this triple whammy of conditions, with the viruses going around, because the kids have all gone back to school and they're sharing them, then there are allergens feeding into their asthma, and they may not have been as consistent with their medications over the summer as they should have been," she said.

Over the summer months, some children quit taking their asthma medication. "For those who can, it's nice to have a break from the medications over the summer," said Dr. Carel, but if they don't get into the routine of taking it before school starts, they can quickly get into trouble.

"I always want them to re-start taking medications at least two weeks before going back to school," said Dr. Carel. "Fortunately, we have great medications that can help keep their inflammation down as much as possible, but it's a matter of them having the medicine in their system when it needs to be in their system," she said.

If you have a child with asthma, doctors recommend these tips to keep them healthy when heading back to school.

- Just like shopping for school supplies or new clothes, make back-to-school asthma planning an annual routine.

- Check all your child's medications to make sure they are not expired, especially if using less medication during the summer months.
- Make an appointment with your child's school nurse to fill out all necessary paperwork before school starts and make sure rescue medication is at the school in case of emergencies.
- Teach your child good hygiene. During the school day your child will interact with dozens of other children, touching and using the same supplies and equipment. Make sure they wash their hands often or carry hand sanitizer to use throughout the day, especially before eating.

"A little planning can go a long way in making sure your child is safe, especially at a time of year when the conditions are most likely to cause problems," said Dr. Carel.

National Jewish Health is known worldwide for its treatment of patients with respiratory, cardiac, immune and related disorders, and for groundbreaking medical research. Founded in 1899 as a nonprofit hospital, National Jewish Health remains the only facility in the world dedicated exclusively to these disorders.

B-ROLL, SOUND BITES, WEB ELEMENTS & HI-RES STILL PHOTOS - Including HD video available for free/unrestricted use by the news media: <http://bit.ly/13mZvCy>
Courtesy: National Jewish Health

For assistance in downloading, or if you have any questions contact:
allison@mediasourcetv.com or by calling the phone number: 614-932-9950.

Patients interests in participating in food-allergy research at National Jewish Health can call 303-270-2222, or click [here](#) for more information.