

News from the Nurse.....Let's talk about Asthma

Many of our Salk Elementary School children have been diagnosed with Asthma. Some children received this diagnosis very early in their life and have since outgrown the common lung disease. These kids may not require any medication or special treatment to help with breathing. Other children have moderate to severe Asthma and require medicine at home and at school to help them during an episode or Asthma attack.

One thing that everyone can do to help keep these kids healthy is to prevent your own child from wearing cologne or after shave or other scented items to school since this could trigger an asthma attack.

It is so important to keep the School Registered Nurse informed of all medical diagnoses, including Asthma. If you have indicated a diagnosis of Asthma on the medical paperwork at the time of enrollment and now have a child who no longer has that diagnosis, please have your physician write a note indicating the removal of that diagnosis on the medical record at school.

Metered-dose inhalers such as Albuterol and Ventolin have gone through a recent permanent change. Beginning on January 1, 2009, the government began requiring all inhalers containing ozone-depleting aerosolized chlorofluorocarbon (CFC) to change to environmentally friendly hydrofluoroalkane propelled (HFA) inhalers. From now on when you refill a prescription for an inhaler, only the HFA type can be sold or dispensed. The newly formulated HFA inhalers have the same essential ingredient, but they are different in the appearance when they are sprayed. The cost to produce them is significantly higher.

The most important information that students and parents need to be aware of with these new HFA inhalers is that they will require more diligence in priming and cleaning than the former CFC inhalers did. The larger molecular structure of these new products causes particles to stick more to the inside of the canister and inside spacer devices (aerochambers), which makes it necessary to clean them more frequently to prevent clogging. If the sprayer is clogged because of moisture, humidity, or ineffective cleaning or priming, a person may reach for their inhaler in an emergency and not be able to administer medication.

It is very important that all children with a diagnosis of Asthma have appropriate medication at school, in the original box. These children should also have a spacer or aerochamber at school and they should have a physician ordered Asthma action plan written at the beginning of each school year and signed by the doctor, the School Registered Nurse and the parent. Any time a student is seen frequently by the school nurse, a follow-up doctor's appointment might be needed to adjust the treatment plan.

As with all Salk Elementary students, please consider a Flu shot or mist for all students with Asthma!! Please talk to your doctor. Please let me know if you have any medical questions or concerns.

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