



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Bracing for a Spike in Asthma Hospitalizations and Emergencies *Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America Issues Alert for Vigilance During COVID-19 Pandemic*

Washington D.C., September 9, 2021 — September is one of the most dangerous times of year for 25 million people in the United States living with asthma. The Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America (AAFA) wants to make sure everyone is aware and prepared to protect individuals' health and reduce the impact on overburdened health systems due to increasing COVID-19 hospitalizations.

Just after the school year starts, September typically has the highest numbers of asthma hospitalizations. This is known as the "[September Asthma Epidemic](#)". The spike in asthma hospitalizations occurs due to an uptick in the spread of respiratory infections, the culmination of ragweed allergy season, and the exposure to indoor environmental triggers and allergens that many students and school staff have been away from all summer (and likely far longer this year due to COVID-19). Viral infections are a major culprit for asthma attacks in children and adults. Asthma hospitalizations tend to climb first for school-age and preschool children, and next, adults. The worst of the month tends to hit by the third week of September, dubbed "[Asthma Peak Week](#)."

"Last year when schools moved to virtual learning and people wore masks in public, emergency room visits and hospitalizations due to asthma dropped. Flu cases also sharply dropped," states Melanie Carver, AAFA's chief mission officer. "Contagious respiratory infections have a much bigger impact on asthma than previously understood and the more we can do to prevent the spread of these illnesses, the more we can control asthma."

With hospitals across the country battling increased COVID-19 cases due to the delta variant, it is more important than ever that we prevent and control the September asthma epidemic.

AAFA recommends the following steps to prevent asthma flare-ups and life-threatening emergencies:

1. Make an appointment with your primary care or specialist doctor if you are having asthma symptoms more than twice per week.
2. Take your asthma medicines as prescribed – an asthma action plan created with your doctor is very helpful.
3. Get your annual flu shot.
4. Get the COVID-19 vaccine(s) if you are eligible.
5. Wear a mask:
 - Indoors with people outside your household
 - Indoors when someone in your home is ill with the flu or COVID-19
 - Outdoors in crowded spaces where you can't keep a distance from other people
 - Outdoors if your asthma is triggered by ragweed or air pollution (check local pollen counts and air quality alerts)



6. Use nasal rinses and nasal corticosteroid sprays if you have a ragweed allergy that triggers your asthma.
7. Use CERTIFIED **asthma & allergy friendly**® air cleaners with HEPA filtration to improve your indoor air quality.
8. Wash your hands often (use moisturizer after washing if you have hand eczema).

AAFA Resources:

- [September Asthma Epidemic](#)
- SYMPTOMS CHART: [Is It COVID-19, the Flu, a Cold, Allergies or Asthma? \(available in English and Spanish\)](#)
- [COVID-19 and Asthma Toolkit for Schools](#)
- [Ragweed Pollen](#)
- [Mold Allergy](#)
- [For People With Asthma, the Danger of “Peak Week” Is Here](#)
- Video: [Losing Laura: Each Day #10TooMany People Die From Asthma](#)
- [Patient Assistance Programs for Free or Low-Cost Medicines](#)
- [Understanding Air Cleaners and Filters](#)

Please connect with AAFA to coordinate interviews or for more information:

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About AAFA

Founded in 1953, AAFA is the oldest and largest non-profit patient organization dedicated to saving lives and reducing the burden of disease for people with asthma, allergies and related conditions through research, education, advocacy and support. AAFA offers extensive support for individuals and families affected by asthma and allergic diseases, such as food allergies and atopic dermatitis (eczema). Through its online patient support communities, network of local chapters and affiliated support groups, AAFA empowers patients and their families by providing practical, evidence-based information and community programs and services. AAFA is the only asthma and allergy patient advocacy group that is certified to meet the standards of excellence set by the National Health Council. For more information, visit www.aafa.org.