

Greetings from the Vermont Asthma Program!

October is *Health Literacy Month*

Celebrate Health Literacy Month by being a [Health Literacy Hero](#). Visit the site to learn more about the importance of health literacy and what you can do to help promote awareness and understanding. Find resources for health literacy and more.

October 1st also marks the beginning of flu season. Use the Health Department's [Flu Clinic Finder](#) and protect yourself and your community by getting your vaccine today! As flu season commences, we also have a special message from State School Nurse Consultant, Sharonlee Trefry, MSN, RN, NCSN:

As the season for respiratory illness has arrived preparations are being made to remind healthcare providers of best practice guidelines in asthma management. The Vermont Department of Health is a good resource for [asthma materials](#); you will also find a variety of reliable links to additional resources.

As school nurses are assessing students and writing [Individual Healthcare Plans](#) or obtaining [Asthma Action Plans](#) for students with a current history of asthma, it is helpful to ensure that the families have insurance and students have seen a medical provider for a well care visit in the last 12 months. [NIH Guidelines for Asthma Diagnosis and Management \(2007\)](#) best practice recommends that individuals with asthma see their medical home provider every 6 months for a review of their asthma management.

Successful management of asthma depends on the accurate use of any prescribed inhalers. It is helpful to ensure that all inhalers are accompanied by a spacer when they arrive at school. Until a spacer is available, for children over 6 years of age, substituting a paper cup, with hole cut out, or a toilet paper tube improves delivery of medication to the lungs. Below are some helpful resources on medication use:

- [Inhaled Asthma Medication: Tips to Remember](#)
- [Can a spacer be used for more than one medication?\(NO sharing between students\)](#)

Thank you so much for taking care of Vermont's students and helping those with asthma learn healthy asthma self-care skills. Best, Sharonlee

Health Literacy

-[Health Information Translations](#) is an online resource targeted toward health care professionals who work with non-native English speakers. They provide multi-language fact sheets in a variety of languages. The website allows users to search by health topic, keyword or any of the 18 languages currently available.

-The "[Allergic March](#)" is a concept to explain the progression in children from eczema in

Upcoming Events

*Promoting Environmental Health and Improved Asthma Control in New England Schools: Policy, Practice and Innovation: October 16

*Asthma Advisory Panel Meeting: January 9, 2015

Did you know?

In Vermont, 32% of children with asthma and 43% of adults with asthma are exposed to 4 or more triggers at home.

31% of adult Vermonters and 48% of youth Vermonters have a written Asthma Action Plan.

About a third of Vermonters with asthma (youth: 33%, adults: 38%) use a woodstove or fireplace in the home.

Fact Sheets

[Health Information Translation's Asthma Fact Sheet in Somali](#)

[Health Information Translation's Asthma Fact Sheet in Bosnian](#)

[Asthma Home Visits: The Three-Visit Model \(Washington State\)](#)

Publications

[Vermont State Asthma Plan](#)

[The Burden of Asthma in Vermont](#)

infancy to childhood asthma or a general description of the life progression of allergic diseases. Allergic diseases tend to develop in the same form and along the same time-scale in many children. Researchers hope that by studying the pattern they may be able to prevent it from progressing.

Asthma and Environmental Health:

-The EPA's Clean Power Plan proposes to place stringent limits on carbon emissions from power plants in order to protect public health. The American Lung Association strongly supports the plan and is urging support from the health and medical community. The plan is projected to prevent up to 6,600 premature deaths and 150,000 asthma attacks every year after full implementation. The public comment period is open until October 16, 2014. [Sign the letter](#) and support the plan. Contact Rebecca Ryan at rryan@lungne.org or 876-6862 with any questions.

-In a step toward identifying a potential cause of the increase in asthma cases, research at Columbia's Mailman School of Public Health were the first to identify an [association between phthalates and asthma risk](#). Phthalates are present in a wide variety of household products, including plastic food containers, insect repellents and synthetic fragrances. The authors noted that the compounds are rarely listed on labels. The children of mother's exposed during pregnancy had a 72% and 78% increase in risk for the two types of phthalates examined.

-The [Washington State Department of Health](#) and the [Northwest Clean Air Agency](#) teamed up to create a video to help people recognize and control asthma triggers in the home. They also have a [toolkit](#) to model a 3-visit home health assessment for asthma.



Asthma Triggers

-October 5-11 is Fire Prevention Week- a great time to promote best burn tips to help keep homes warm and healthier. It's also a great opportunity to share the health and safety benefits of replacing an old wood stove with cleaner, more efficient home heating. Approximately 10 million wood stoves are currently in use in the United States, and 65 percent of them are older, inefficient, conventional stoves. Twenty-year-old, non-EPA certified wood stoves can emit more than 1 ton of fine particle pollution (PM2.5) into your area during the cold months of the year. Smoke from wood-burning stoves and fireplaces contain a mixture of harmful gases and small particles. Breathing these small particles can cause asthma attacks and severe bronchitis, aggravate heart and lung disease, and may increase the likelihood of respiratory illnesses. EPA Burn Wise offers

[Healthy Vermonters 2020](#)

Quick Links

[VDH Asthma Program](#)

[Controlling Asthma](#)

[Tools for Managing Asthma](#)

[Asthma Surveillance](#)

[Resources & Information](#)

[Envision Program](#)



**YOU CAN QUIT.
WE CAN HELP.**

VERMONT DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
1-800-QUIT-NOW (784-8669) 802Quits.org

Join Our Mailing List!

the following tools to encourage best burn tips and to help improve the air and health of your community. To help reduce wood smoke in your area, share these tools with local media, partners and others to promote on social media, websites, and newsletters.

- [News Article](#)
- [Fire and Health Safety Fast Facts](#)
- [Four Easy Steps InfoGraphic](#)
- [Asthma Video PSA](#)
- [Split, Stack, Cover and Store Video PSA](#)
- [Additional Health Resources and Tools](#)
- [More Video and Radio PSAs](#)



School Health and Asthma

-The Vermont Department of Health is urging schools in the state to take preventive measures against an enterovirus, or EV-D68, outbreak that is occurring in other states, including Pennsylvania and New York. Children with asthma are especially at risk and breathing should be monitored carefully by parents and teachers. Symptoms of the enterovirus are cold-like: wheezing, severe cough, fever and congestion. The spread of the virus can be prevented by hand washing, covering mouths when coughing, disinfection of surfaces and limiting the sharing of food and drinks. Teachers and parents should practice these habits and encourage children to do the same. With flu season coming up, it is important to limit the spread of these diseases. The [attached letter](#) can be provided for parents.



CVMC's Rich Hincliffe discusses Enterovirus and this strain's particular impact on children with asthma. [Click to watch.](#)

-MedLine Plus has an useful [video](#) on Asthma Action Plans. It should be noted, however, that the use of spacers should always be encouraged for optimal medication use.

-The [Asthma Regional Council of New England](#) is hosting a one-day conference, "Promoting Environmental Health and Improved Asthma Control in New England Schools: Policy, Practice and Innovation." The event will take place Thursday, October 16 in Boylston, MA and is open to health care providers, educators, state health staff, and anyone else interested. [Click through for additional information and to register.](#)

Smoking and Asthma

-A recent [report](#) showed that 80% of homes in the United States ban smoking. The researchers credited "considerable progress" in social norms and a sensitization toward smoking habits, even by smokers. Over 90% of non-smokers ban smoking in their homes compared to a little under 60% just 20 years ago. The spread of smoke-free policies is also considered as a contributing factor for the increase. Children and those with conditions like asthma are especially likely to feel the positive effects of this social change.

Please keep in touch!

Let us know if you have any questions -- or if there's an asthma-related issue you'd like to know more about.

Take care,

Jane

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