

STUDY UP FOR A SNEEZE AND WHEEZE-FREE SCHOOL YEAR

Make the Grade by Avoiding Asthma, Allergy Triggers Lurking in the Classroom

The new school year means new clothes, new classes, new teachers – and the same old misery due to sneezing and wheezing for children who have allergies or asthma. From the class hamster to dust mites residing in carpet to germs from cold and flu viruses, asthma and allergy triggers lurk throughout the classroom.

It's not so surprising, then, that back-to-school season is associated with a 46 percent increase in asthma-related emergency department visits by grade school children. And allergies and asthma account for more than 14 million school day absences. But seeing an allergist can keep kids in the classroom: studies show patients treated by allergists for asthma have better symptom control, including less wheezing and fewer absences, at lower costs.

“To keep kids focused on their studies instead of their allergy and asthma symptoms, it's important that they receive proper diagnosis and treatment, as well as work with their parents to develop a plan for avoiding classroom triggers,” said Board Certified Allergists Dr. Daniel Reichmuth and Dr. Sami Nallamshetty

Make sure your child doesn't suffer or miss school by following the advice, below, from Dr. Daniel Reichmuth and Dr. Sami Nallamshetty and the American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology (ACAAI):

- **Dust and mold and pollen, oh my** – Many common triggers lie in wait for the allergic student. Dust mites and other allergens multiply in the class carpet, so suggest your child sit in a chair to read a book. Mold can grow in bathrooms and other dank areas, but are easily cleaned if brought to the janitor's attention. And ask teachers to keep windows closed this fall and next spring to keep sneeze-prompting pollens out of the classroom.
- **The germ incubator** – It's tough for the child with asthma to avoid germs at school, since they are pretty much everywhere from the pencil sharpener to the edge of the teacher's desk. The best defense is a good offense, so be sure your child gets a seasonal flu shot. Washing hands regularly and using tissues and antibacterial hand sanitizers also can help.
- **Tag, you're – huff, puff – it** – Jumping jacks during gym, tag during recess, soccer after school – these and other common school activities can trigger exercise-induced bronchoconstriction (EIB), commonly referred to as exercise induced asthma. About 80 percent to 90 percent of those with asthma have EIB and 10 percent of people without asthma have EIB. If your child has difficulty breathing during or after exercise, see an allergist who can work with you on a prevention and treatment plan. Be sure to give teachers, from gym to homeroom, a heads up and make sure your child has medication available at school.
- **Fear of furry friends** – Kids love class pets, but many have allergies to the hairy or furry variety. Allergic children should be reminded not to touch the pet. You also might suggest the teacher consider a non-furry pet, such as fish or a hermit crab, which offer plenty of learning opportunities without the allergy-triggering dander. Children who have pets at home also may have pet dander on their clothes, triggering symptoms in a pet-allergic child. A new seat assignment may help.

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- **Food safety patrol** – If your child has food allergies, potential problems can crop up almost anywhere, from the lunchroom to the classroom. Tell the teacher about foods that cause problems for your child. Also be sure to alert scouting and other club leaders, and suggest an allergen-free snack policy). It's also important to teach your child about what foods might trigger a reaction and advise them to ask a teacher or adult before eating food they are unsure about. Share a plan with teachers, coaches and the school nurse for dealing with an allergic emergency and make sure your child has medications with them like injectable epinephrine.
- **The back of the class** – Sitting at the front of the classroom – near the chalkboard – is a bad idea for kids whose allergies or asthma are triggered by chalk dust. And washing hands after writing on the chalk board is a must.

If your child is sneezing, wheezing and itching at school and you're not sure why, see an allergist to find out what's causing the problem and find relief. For more information about [allergies in children](#), [asthma in children](#), or take a self-relief test visit www.AllergyAndAsthmaRelief.org.



Dr. Daniel Reichmuth is a graduate of Indiana Medical School and at the University of South Florida. He completed his residency in internal medicine (and served as Chief Resident) and fellowships in both allergy and clinical immunology and clinical laboratory immunology. Dr. Reichmuth is dual board certified through the American Board of Allergy and Immunology (www.abai.org) and the American Board of Internal Medicine (www.abim.org). Dr. Reichmuth stays current in both of these boards (Allergy and Clinical Immunology and Internal Medicine) through Maintenance of Certification (MOC). The American Board of Allergy and Clinical Immunology is a conjoint board of The American Board of Pediatrics and the American Board of Internal Medicine. Dr. Reichmuth has also been selected by his peers in the *Best Doctors in America*® Database on numerous occasions. He is currently accepting new pediatric and adult patients at both his Wesley Chapel and Zephyrhills practice locations. **Dr. Reichmuth can be reached at 813-779-8194.**



Dr. Sami Nallamshetty is a graduate of Harvard Medical School in Boston where she completed a combined pediatric and adult allergy & immunology fellowship program at Brigham and Women's and Boston Children's Hospitals. She is double board certified in pediatric and adult allergy and immunology through the American Boards of Allergy and Immunology and Internal Medicine. She has been distinguished as a Fellow of the American College of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology. Dr. Nallamshetty has published her research in top scientific journals and has been awarded several research grants.

Dr. Nallamshetty specializes in managing conditions such as seasonal allergies, food allergies, asthma, eczema, sinus disease, and immunologic disorders. She is actively involved in our local community and is the Anaphylaxis Community Expert physician for the Allergy & Asthma Network/Mothers of Asthmatics. She works closely with families to help them better understand and prevent anaphylaxis and other allergic disorders.

Dr. Sami Nallamshetty is currently accepting new pediatric and adult patients at both her Wesley Chapel and Carrollwood practice locations. She looks forward to helping you and your family manage your allergies and improve your quality of life.

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