American Latex Allergy Association

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Inhalers and Epinephrine At School

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What happens if your child has a serious allergic reaction at school? Do you know the school?s policy on children carrying inhalers and/or epinephrine? Twenty-nine states have passed legislation allowing students to carry and self-administer prescribed inhalers, and eighteen of those states have also passed legislation allowing use of prescribed epinephrine. California, Pennsylvania, and New York currently have legislation pending.

States allowing students to carry and self-administer inhalers include: Alabama, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Rhode Island, Texas, Tennessee, Utah, Virginia, West Virginia, and Wisconsin.

The following states also allow students to carry and self-administer epinephrine: Alabama, Delaware, Georgia, Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, New Jersey, New Hampshire, West Virginia, and Wisconsin.

If your state isn?t listed, contact your state representatives or Department of Education. The Allergy & Asthma Network/ Mothers of Asthmatics website (**www.aanma.org** [1]) is a terrific resource with legislation links and helpful tips for talking with school and state officials.

Students who have asthma are also covered under Title II of the American Disabilities Act of 1990, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Title II and Section 504 provide access to federally funded services for any handicapped person. IDEA provides funds for schools that follow specific recommendations to better serve these students.

It?s one thing for state legislation to be in place, and quite another to convince schools to implement their own policies. Parents need to be proactive in talking with school officials and developing an action plan specific to their child?s needs.

The American Academy of Allergy Asthma & Immunology recommends steps parents should take to ensure a healthy school year for their child, the first being to meet with teachers, the principal, and the school nurse to discuss their child?s condition. If the child has food allergies, the cafeteria manager should also be included. A

safe school environment exists when everyone is in agreement about the student?s action plan and medications, and the child knows to tell teachers and coaches when symptoms worsen. Parents should be sure their child has his or her medications and peak flow meter at school, and that the child knows what triggers an asthma attack or allergic reaction, as well as how and when to use medications.

It?s also beneficial to start a support group for children with asthma and/or allergies and their parents. School officials might be more receptive to a group of parents who are well-informed and organized, and it will help young students to feel less alone and less fearful of being different from their peers.

There are many helpful resources on the Web for parents and school staff, as well as examples throughout this newsletter. Take action to protect your child?s health, so school can be about growth and learning.

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Links:
[1] http://www.aanma.org