**#AskAboutAsthma campaign returns for fourth year to improve the lives of young people in the time of Covid**

Help manage and improve the treatment of asthma by taking small steps.

1 in 10 children and young people in London have asthma but less than half of these have an asthma management plan or know how to use their inhaler correctly. Many have badly managed asthma – to the extent that 4,000 are admitted to hospital with asthma every year and 170 have such a severe episode that they require admission to intensive care.

This September, to coincide with children and young people returning back to school in the time of Covid and the highest hospital admission rates for asthma (week 38), Healthy London Partnership and NHS England (London), supported by the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan are running their fourth public awareness campaign #AskAboutAsthma to encourage small steps to improve the quality of life of those living with asthma in London.

Keeping children’s asthma under control is particularly important this year due to the coronavirus and any potential second wave.

The campaign aims to encourage health professionals, children and young people and their families to ASK for three simple effective interventions to help them control their asthma by:

* having an asthma management plan
* being able to use their inhaler effectively
* having an annual asthma review (as a minimum)

As part of this week, we’re also hosting our first virtual conference (Wednesday 16, September) of interactive presentations which includes an update on children and young people’s asthma in London and the latest developments during Covid-19 and how to support young patients. Register via Eventbrite [here](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/askaboutasthma-2020-back-to-school-in-the-time-of-covid-19-tickets-113870405448)

In addition, the week will also consist of a week-long schedule of webinars, podcasts, blogs and ongoing social media activity.

**Dr Vin Diwakar, NHS London Region Medical Director, said:**

“During the lockdown period admissions to hospital for childhood asthmahave reduced but we mustn’t be complacent since winter is approaching. Poorly controlled asthma is a frightening experience for any child or young people  and their family.

“We know that an annual asthma review, an inhaler check and an asthma plan help a young person to control their asthma. It’s never been safer and easier for children, young people and their families to receive regular asthma reviews, as the NHS has ramped up its virtual capacity and shifted from face to face to video appointments.

“As a paediatrician and Medical Director for London, I am delighted that the #AskAboutAsthma campaign will return for the fourth year this September. The campaign will grow and reinforce the movement of organisations and people who are focussed on implementing the simple steps everyone can take to consistently provide excellent asthma care to children and young people and help them live healthier, more active lives.”

**Dr Andy Whittamore, Clinical Lead at Asthma UK and a practising GP, said:**

“We know that people with asthma who have a written asthma action plan are four times less likely to be admitted to hospital, which is important at a time when the NHS is under increased pressure. We encourage everyone with asthma to contact their GP surgery to arrange an annual asthma review, where they can learn correct inhaler techniques and be provided with a personalised asthma action plan.

“The #AskAboutAsthma campaign is a positive step, which will help young people with asthma to manage their condition as they return to the classroom and reduce the risk of them having a potentially life-threatening asthma attack.”

**The Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, said:**

“Having developed asthma as an adult, I know how vital our work is to clean up our city’s toxic air and prevent many more Londoners becoming ill.

“In the midst of a pandemic that puts people with respiratory conditions at increased risk of catching Covid-19, it’s more important than ever that we all play our part in improving our air quality and avoiding a car-led economic recovery.

“I welcome the #AskAboutAsthma campaign and want to see more young Londoners empowered from an early age so that they can get the support they need to lead full and healthy lives.”

As part of the #AskAboutAsthma campaign, we are also asking organisations, businesses, and residents in London to take simple steps to improve air quality. This includes;

* Encouraging more exercise by walking or cycling to work or school
* To use public transport to improve air pollution and reduce car emissions
* Try car-pooling and turning off engines when idle
* To use non/less toxic materials in homes and offices
* To have greenery in and around homes and offices.

For more information about the campaign and to download our toolkit visit [www.healthylondon.org/our-work/children-young-people/asthma/askaboutasthma](http://www.healthylondon.org/our-work/children-young-people/asthma/askaboutasthma)

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## Find out more

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## Notes

Healthy London Partenrship aims to make London the healthiest global city in the world.

We do this by:

* Bringing together partners, experts in improvement and transformation and Londoners, to work towards the common goals set out in [Better Health for London](https://www.healthylondon.org/resource/better-health-london-report/), [NHS Five Year Forward View](https://www.england.nhs.uk/five-year-forward-view/), the [NHS Long Term Plan](https://www.healthylondon.org/the-nhs-long-term-plan-to-tackle-major-killer-conditions-and-save-up-to-half-a-million-lives/), and the [Devolution agreement](https://www.healthylondon.org/resource/london-devolution-mou-and-summary/)
* Developing an evidence base so we inspire London to be the best it can be, gathering insight and data, building on local successes and sharing learning and best practice
* Tackling issues best solved ‘once for London’ by pooling resources and attracting additional funding to significant London issues like children and young people’s mental health or access to GPs

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