

Breathe easy

at home program

Taking Control:

Asthma, Allergies and the Flu

The Flu...in April!

It's Spring and the word "Flu" is still in the air. For some of us, there isn't too much worry, but for those who have or treat patients with asthma, this may still be a cause for concern. The most common strain this flu season: H3N2, a particularly nasty strain, with 55 flu linked reported deaths in children and older adults also being strongly affected (CDC). While H3N2 is declining, a second wave of "B" flu has hit in the past few weeks prompting Dr. Marty Hirsch, an infectious disease specialist and virologist out of MGH, to recommend those who have not received their flu shot to do so now.

Here are 10 lessons from Dr. Hirsch :

1. The flu season is **not** over
2. This is a really bad flu year...
3. ...Especially for old folks and young ones
4. The elderly are more vulnerable because of their aged immune system
5. We aren't sure why this bug is so mean
6. Flu doesn't typically kill people, it opens the door to bacteria that kills
7. The flu may not affect you, but other viruses might
8. Be careful of those who got better then suddenly worsened
9. Bad flu years mean more bacterial infections
10. Something may be wrong if it's taking a long time to recover

To dive more deeply into the 10 Lessons, click [here](#). Also, visit the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's [2016-2017 Weekly U.S. Influenza Surveillance Report](#) for flu tracking, graphs and reports.

And since the flu season is still upon us and the temperature is constantly fluctuating, here is a flyer created by the asthma program here at the Commission that healthcare professionals can pass along to their patients.

HOW TO KEEP YOUR ASTHMA UNDER CONTROL THIS WINTER

The cold and flu seasons is upon us and this is the time of year when asthma symptoms -- coughing, wheezing or shortness of breath -- can worsen. While we can't control the winter weather, there is a lot you can do to control your child's asthma, regardless of their age, and to help them stay healthy.

PREVENTION WORKS! BE PREPARED!

If your child hasn't seen their doctor about their asthma this season, make an appointment to:

- Help ensure that your child's asthma is controlled
- Adjust your child's controller and/or rescue medications as needed
- Update your child's Asthma Action Plan, as needed - This care plan can help you know when and how to use each of your child's asthma medicines. Have a copy nearby and give one to your school nurse/teacher.
- Make sure you have up-to-date and enough medication when and where you'll need it* (i.e. home, school, with other caregivers, etc.)
- Get the flu vaccine for your child - it's not too late! The flu vaccine is the best way to protect your family from influenza, which can worsen asthma symptoms.

Know the early warning signs of an asthma attack so you can catch it early and prevent an emergency or very serious situation. When in doubt call 911.

Prevent triggers that can make asthma worse:

- Breathing in cold air: Use scarves and neck warmers to keep your child's neck and face covered.
- Colds and influenza: Wash your hands frequently and avoid people who are sick or coughing.
- Cigarettes and other tobacco smoke: Don't smoke in your car or home and use a separate "smoking jacket" that you leave outside of your home. If you are interested in learning more about quitting smoking contact the Massachusetts Smokers' Helpline: 1-800-QUIT-NOW or 1-800-784-8669
- Dust mites in your home if your child is allergic: Use dust mite-proof mattress and pillow covers, use a HEPA vacuum to clean floors, and frequently wash comforters and children's stuffed animals by heating them in a hot clothes dryer for 20 minutes every week.

*Note: It is very important to make sure your child has enough of their prescribed daily and emergency asthma medications. Do not get off or reuse their prescription inhalers or oral steroids until they are told to do so. The medications may have gone stale. It is never safe to make use of the medication unless you clearly keep properly. Be sure to fill your child's, your supply is important. Please help ensure they have proper medications and are taking their medications properly. Even if your child has or seems okay, it is important that they have their controller medications as prescribed.

Ask your doctor or local pharmacist if you need medical advice or support.

All students and parents should contact their doctor and school nurse for more information. For additional information visit: [www.mass.gov/asthma](#)

Spring/Summer 2017

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Important Dates

April 1st, 2017

Annual Immigrants' Day at the State House

May 4th, 2017

World Asthma Day is right around the corner, on May 2nd this year. Join Boston Children's Hospital for their annual World Asthma Day event which will be held on May 4th. There will be info tables and opportunities to learn from others in the City as to what they are doing in



WORLD ASTHMA DAY

May 2, 2017

ginasthma.org/wad #[@ginasthma](https://twitter.com/ginasthma)

regards to Asthma.

June 2017

This June we will be holding the 7th annual Collaborative Meeting on Safe & Healthy Housing which brings together staff from BPHC, ISD, Elderly Commission, BHA and others.



Did You Know?

The Asthma & Allergy Foundation of America has a Certified Products App?

To help consumers navigate the world of false or exaggerated product claims the AAFA collaborated with Allergy Standards Limited to create the asthma & allergy friendly certification program. This program "helps patients to understand product claims and make informed purchases...test[ing] household products against strict standards". Products that pass receive the asthma and allergy certification mark.



Visit the [Asthma & Allergy Friendly website](#) to view a list of products currently certified.

Download the **Asthma & Allergy Friendly Certified Products** app via [iTunes](#) for iPhones or through [Google Play](#) for Android users.

Taking Control:

Asthma, Allergies and the Flu

Getting ahead of asthma and allergies in the Spring

March 20th marked the official beginning of Spring. While it may not feel like it to everyone, and with snow falling the first weekend of April, those who have asthma and allergies surely do sense it. So here are a few tips put together by the Commission's asthma program, this time for Spring, that you can pass along to your patients. Suggestions courtesy of the **Asthma & Allergy Foundation of America**:



Spring has sprung and for those who suffer from asthma or have allergies, this can be an unpleasant time. If allergies are making your asthma worse it is important to treat those reaction to prevent serious attacks. Here are a few tips that can ease some of your symptoms and get your asthma and allergies under control.

TALK TO YOUR HEALTHCARE PROVIDER:

- Be sure to keep them informed if you begin having trouble controlling your asthma or allergy symptoms.
- If asthma flare-ups are frequent during the spring months, talk to your asthma care provider about getting tested for common allergens

TAKE ALLERGY MEDICATIONS:

- If you have spring allergies, your provider may recommend that you start taking an allergy medication a week or so before the season begins.

WASH AND DRY YOUR BEDDING & CLOTHES INDOORS:

- Wash bedding in hot, soapy water once a week. Dry your clothes in a clothes dryer, not on an outdoor line.
- Outdoor clotheslines can leave your laundry coated in pollen.

WEAR SUNGLASSES & A HAT

- Sunglasses, hats, and other protective clothing will help keep pollen out of your eyes and off your hair.

LIMIT OUTDOOR PET CONTACT:

- Limit close contact with pets that spend a lot of time outdoors.

KEEP UP WITH YOUR ASTHMA MEDICATIONS:

- It's very important to have your rescue inhaler on hand (like albuterol or ProAir) in case it is needed.
- Reducing airway inflammation with the use of your controller medication (like Flovent, QVAR, or Advair) as prescribed can help prevent asthma attacks.

REMOVE POLLEN FROM YOUR BODY

- Bathe and shampoo your hair more before going to bed. This will remove pollen from your hair and skin and keep it off your bedding.

LIMIT YOUR OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES:

- When pollen counts are high, limit the amount of time spent outside.
- The morning tends to have the highest pollen counts. It's best to avoid being outdoors between the peak hours of 5 AM- 10 AM.
- Check out the Weather Channel or an allergy tracker tool that can tell you the pollen levels in your area.

KEEP THE OUTSIDE AIR OUT:

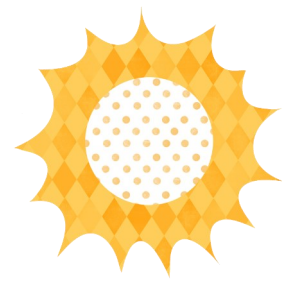
- Keep windows closed during pollen season and use central air conditioning with HEPA filter attachment. This applies to your home and to any vehicle.

*Note: It is very important to make sure your child has enough of his/her prescribed daily and emergency asthma medications. Be sure to get refills and ensure the proper medications are on hand and not expired. The medication may save your child's life. A spacer helps to make sure the medicine reaches your child's lungs properly. No matter how old your child is, your support is important. Please help ensure they have proper medication and are taking their medications properly. Even if your child feels or seems okay, it is important that they stay on their controller medications as prescribed. Ask your doctor or local pharmacist if you need medical advice or support.

All students and parents should contact their doctor and school nurse for more information.

For additional information visit bphc.org/asthma





Breathe Easy at Home & The Asthma Home Visit Programs

The Boston Public Health Commission's Healthy Homes and Community Supports Division has two programs that work with the city's asthma patients: [The Breathe Easy at Home Program](#) and [The Asthma Home Visit Program](#).

- ⇒ Have staff that are not aware of what the Breathe Easy at Home Program does or that we exist?
- ⇒ Not too sure what the difference between the Asthma Home Visit Program and Breathe Easy is?
- ⇒ Have questions about the two referral processes?
- ⇒ Believe the programs are solely for pediatric patients?
- ⇒ Need clarification as to which program focuses on landlord issues and which is for patient and parent/guardian s?

Both the Breathe Easy at Home Program (BEAH) and the Asthma Home Visit Program Coordinators can answer all these questions and more! All of Boston's major hospitals and community health centers can request to have us hold information/training sessions with us. We also reach out to each health care center twice a year to inquire about hosting us. During these sessions both coordinators will come to your site and present on our respective programs, answer questions and provide resources for staff and patients. Want to schedule a session?

Contact Theresa, BEAH Program Coordinator at:
617-534-2485 or email asthma@bphc.org.

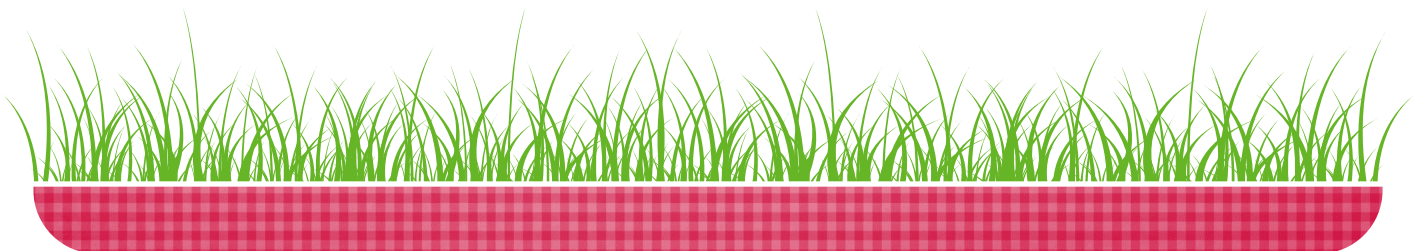
*When holding presentations for community health centers I like to describe the two programs as complimentary but separate. They can both be categorized by an **I** and an **E**, which, for each program, stands for something specific.*

The Asthma Home Visit Program is for

Information & Education

While the Breathe Easy at Home Program is for

Inspection & Enforcement



Immigration

The flyer to the right was created for healthcare and human/social services members in the city by Medical Legal Partnership -Boston (MLP) due to the rising concern surrounding the current administration and it's abrupt and ,often times, confusing policies.

You can find more information on MLP by visiting their [webpage](#).

NOTE:

"It is not in the best interest of the landlord to report undocumented tenants, because the landlord has what the law calls 'unclean hands' in this context: by reporting to immigration authorities, a landlord is effectively admitting that s/he has been accepting rent from undocumented tenants, which exposes the landlord to liability. In short, landlords may threaten to report, but in our experience do not report because of the personal risk it would trigger."

-MLP

For more information on immigrant rights contact the **Massachusetts Immigrant & Refugee Advocacy Coalition (MIRA)** at 617-350-5480 or visit them [online](#) for "Know Your Rights" resources and more.



mlpboston.org

MLPB equips the healthcare and human services workforce with legal problem-solving strategies that address health-related social needs. By doing so, we advance health equity for individuals, families, and communities.

Communicating Effectively in the New Immigration Landscape: Best Practices for Healthcare and Human Services Teams

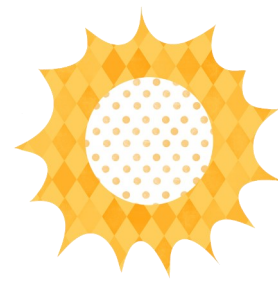


Federal law and public policy regarding immigration is rapidly evolving. Information contained in this document is for educational purposes only and does not constitute legal advice or establish an attorney-client relationship. If patients or caregivers have specific questions, they should contact a lawyer or advocate.

- 1 Only document a person's immigration status to the extent doing so is required by federal or state law. If you have questions about whether you are required to collect this information from patients/clients, contact your organization's legal counsel and/or risk management team**
 - HIPAA does not protect medical records in all situations
 - Documenting that a discussion about immigration happened is different from documenting a person's actual status
 - If you must ask the person about immigration status, clearly explain why you are seeking the information

- 2 Use caution when discussing immigration status with people**
 - Immigration status impacts access to insurance as well other benefits and services
 - In the current climate, initiating conversations about immigration status may decrease rapport and increase withdrawal from care
 - Reassure people that they remain welcome in your clinic/program, and that you are invested in their health and wellbeing

- 3 Inevitably some people will withdraw from care or miss appointments**
 - Keep updated contact information so you can reach out
 - Remember people may be facing stressors and situations beyond their control



Provider Resources

BWH Special Program for:
RNs, LPNs, CMAs, Patient Care Attendants,
Community Health Workers, Childcare Providers,
and Other Allied Healthcare Providers

PARTNERS
ASTHMA CENTER

Learn and Teach About Asthma
Saturday, June 17, 2017
8:30 a.m. – 2:15 p.m.
Reggie Lewis Track and Athletic Center
1350 Tremont Street, Roxbury, MA

Schedule:		Includes:
8:30 a.m.	Welcome, Review of Objectives, Introductions	Breakfast and lunch Childcare Certificate of Completion
9:00 a.m.	Pathophysiology and the Prevention of Asthma	
10:00 a.m.	Medications for the Treatment of Asthma	Fee:
11:15 a.m.	Break	Advanced registration: \$30
11:35 a.m.	Asthma Triggers and Environmental Control	Special student rate: \$20
12:45 p.m.	Interactive Activity	On-site: \$35
1:00 p.m.	Q & A	Co-Sponsors:
1:15 p.m.	Pulmonary Function Testing	Boston Public Health Commission Boston Children's Hospital Brookside Community Health Ctr Partners Asthma Center

4.25 Nursing Contact Hours will be Awarded

This activity has been approved by the American Nurses Association Massachusetts for 4.25 nursing contact hours. ANA Massachusetts is accredited as an approver of continuing nursing education by the American Nurses Credentialing Center's Commission on Accreditation.

For more information or to pre-register: call Jackie at 617-732-7464

Partners Asthma Center is holding it's annual **LEARN & TEACH ABOUT ASTHMA**. This one day program is specifically for RNs, LPNs, CMAs, CHWs, Childcare providers, Patient Care Attendants and other Allied Healthcare Providers. This event is co-sponsored by BPHC, BCH, Brookside Community Health Center and Partners Asthma Center and is conducted by Dr. Christopher Fanta, Pulmonologist and Director of the Partners Asthma Center.

Click the flyer to the left for registration information.

Smoking Cessation Program

Have you been thinking about quitting smoking? It's time to put your thoughts to action. Each year thousands of people stop smoking and you can too! Our Smoking Cessation Program can offer you assistance in planning to quit and staying tobacco free.

Are you ready to **BREAK** the habit?

Join us for 8 weeks of interactive sessions in a support group setting with leading BWH Clinicians. Sessions will feature lectures, skill practices and counseling to help you stop smoking for good.

PRE-REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED

Next Session Begins April 6, 2017, 12:00-1:00pm
Contact us at bwhquitsmoking@partners.org for more details

BWH BRIGHAM AND WOMEN'S HOSPITAL
The Lung Center
75 Francis Street, Boston, MA 02115

For program information or to enroll in the next session, contact us at 617-278-0578 or bwhquitsmoking@partners.org

Have a patient who has been contemplating quitting smoking? Brigham & Women's (BWH) is holding an eight week **Smoking Cessation Program** which begins on April 6th. Click the flyer to the right to learn more.

Are you a devoted healthcare provider helping patients and families manage asthma and looking for a forum to connect and share? Visit MABetterBreathing.org, the Massachusetts Community Health Centers' Asthma Educators Collaborative.

