

December 2017

Asthma Link

Newsletter of Asthma Waikato | Te Ha Ora Huango

Ngati Haua Rural School

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encourage and inform people
with breathing difficulties

From the Manager

It is hard to believe another year is nearly at a close. It seems to have been a particularly difficult winter for many asthma sufferers this year and we have been very busy with referrals. On reflection, Asthma Waikato has achieved a huge amount during 2017. We are in a great position moving into 2018 to take our services to the next level. Funding, as always, is the great limitation to what we want to do, therefore we will be actively looking for sponsors in 2018 who want to partner with us to help our work and the important messages we need to get out there. If you would like to see what this partnership could look like, please do get in touch.

On the back page of this brochure is a shout-out to all our wonderful financial supporters over the past year. We can't do what we do without you so we are sending you a huge thank you from the team.

I would also like to thank all our wonderful volunteers which also include our Board members – your work, support and the time you invest in Asthma Waikato is very much appreciated. And a massive thank

you my wonderful staff, Elyse and Carolyn. Thank you for all your hard work.

Enjoy your holidays and let's hope the weather is kinder than it has been the rest of the year! Merry Christmas to all.

As always we are here to help so get in touch if you would like to find out more.

Sheryl Long, Operational Manager

Christmas is just plain weird. What other time of the year do you sit in front of a dead tree in your living room eating candy and snacks out of your socks?

Community Education – Getting out and about in the community

In October I attended a community education session, where I was lucky enough to present to a group of mothers of pre-schoolers on asthma and asthma management. As it was my first presentation on behalf of Asthma Waikato I found it exciting, and I'm pleased to say that it was a success. I feel very privileged to have met such an awesome group of women!

Mothers of Pre-schoolers (MOPS) is a community group where mothers can come together to discuss all aspects of motherhood, and take part in arts, crafts, and education sessions. Activate Church in Hamilton host a MOPS group every alternate week. They asked us to come along and provide some education about asthma, including symptom management, recognition of triggers, and medication management. Activate MOPS were incredibly welcoming and accommodating, and I thoroughly enjoyed being able to host a Q&A session at the end of my presentation to ensure I was able to answer their questions and tell them everything they needed to know. Thanks MOPS for being such a fun and interactive group! <http://www.mops.org/>

Since our MOPS presentation, we have been rolling out a few community education sessions in between catching up with our patient referrals. On the 14th November, we visited Ngati Haua School to provide education to kids with asthma, and we invited their whanau and teachers to attend also.

Ngati Haua is a small, rural school with a population of kids with asthma. The staff and students were all very welcoming, and joined me in one of their classrooms for an education session on asthma. The students of Ngati Haua did a great job of answering questions and participating in the presentation. We talked about what



asthma is, how it makes them feel, when to take their inhalers, and what to do in an emergency, plus more!

One of the key things we spoke about was making sure that each child had an asthma buddy at school that knew what to do if their friend was experiencing symptoms of asthma and needed a teacher to bring them their inhaler. We also talked about when and how to take their inhalers, and I was really impressed at their knowledge and compliance with using a spacer. Studies have shown that using a spacer increases the effectiveness of asthma medication by 70%! So it's awesome to see everyone using them.

After our presentation, we gave each of the children with asthma one of our blue asthma bags, with a blank action plan, information on asthma and Asthma Waikato, and a letter to their whanau inside of it. They absolutely loved these, and agreed that this would be a great way to keep their inhaler and spacer together and with them at all times.

If your school or community group would like Asthma Waikato to come and visit for an education session, please get in touch with us.

Elyse Jones, Respiratory Nurse Educator



Hi! I'm Carolyn Munro and I recently joined the Asthma Waikato team in the role of Respiratory Support Worker. Having developed asthma at an early age, I understand what it's like to struggle to breathe as a child and adult, and having to carry reliever medicine with me at all times. I am looking forward to working as part of the asthma team to help families understand and learn how to manage asthma better.



Meet Carolyn

Family Feedback

"Excellent informative session, feel a lot more confident in treating Turongo and aware of the overall health picture in relation to asthma. Thank you so much, an excellent service."

Yolande, Turongo's mum



Turongo Dixon

BOOK

NOW

SPIROMETRY COURSE

13TH & 14TH DEC 2017
9AM-4PM

GO TO OUR WEBSITE FOR MORE DETAILS

www.asthmawaikato.org.nz

Don't become complacent this Summer



Summer is finally here, and if you're anything like the team at Asthma Waikato, you'll be looking forward to getting outdoors and soaking up some sun! This year in New Zealand, we experienced our coldest winter in the last eight years (New Zealand Herald, 2017), but with warmer weather on its way and hospitalisations from asthma decreasing, it's easy to forget the importance of managing your asthma all year round!

A common misconception is that asthma symptoms are only triggered in the winter months by cold air, moisture, and changes in temperature. Although winter is historically the worst time of year for asthma sufferers, it is actually allergies that are responsible for 80% of asthma flare-ups (Asthma and Respiratory Foundation, 2017). Through the months of September – March, pollens and other allergens can be particularly problematic for asthmatics. They can increase inflammation inside the airways, along with other asthma and hay fever associated symptoms, which can lead to poorer asthma control by the time winter comes around again. That's why it is important to continue taking your preventer even when you feel well.

We know that summer is a busy time for most, so to simplify things for you, we have listed a few tips for keeping in control of your asthma (or your children's asthma) throughout these warmer months:

1. Be organised! Check your medications/inhalers and spacers

Do you need a new prescription for your inhalers or other medications to see you through summer? Make sure you check how many inhalers you have, check the expiry dates, and check that they still have enough medication in them. Tip: Some inhalers will have a dose counter, but for those that don't, remove the canister from your inhaler and shake it to listen and make sure you still have plenty of medication itself in the canister.

2. Keep everything together and easily accessible

Keep your inhalers, spacer, mask (if you use one), and asthma action plan in a safe place where you'll always be able to find it at short notice. Make sure your friends and family know where this is too. Our Asthma Waikato bags are ideal for this, but if you don't have one, you can use a shopping bag or a toilet bag etc.

3. Set reminders for yourself or your children

Summer can be a busy season! Playing on the beach, swimming, cooking the BBQ... all of these things can be distracting enough that you forget to take your inhalers as per usual, especially if you're staying away from home and you are out of your normal daily routine. Set a reminder on your phone to take your regular medications or write yourself a daily note and leave it somewhere you're sure to see it.

4. Take note of triggers and avoid as able

Knowledge is power! If you know what triggers your asthma, you are more likely to identify at-risk situations and avoid becoming unwell. Some common triggers in the summer months are: cold air in the evenings, smoke from BBQ's or wood fires, animal allergens, increased physical activity etc.

5. Know your nearest medical facility

If you're going on holiday to an unfamiliar area, make a point of researching the closest medical/healthcare facility. This is handy to know for many reasons; if you or a friend or family member becomes unwell or is injured, in a non-emergency, you'll be able to save time and worry by knowing where you need to go to seek help.

We hope these tips are helpful for you to manage your asthma effectively this summer.

The Asthma and Respiratory Foundation of NZ have an excellent resource called the 'Summer Holiday Asthma and allergies checklist' – you can find this online at www.asthmafoundation.org.nz, or get in touch with Asthma Waikato if you have any other questions or concerns!

allergies are responsible for **80%** of asthma flare-ups

Have a safe and happy summer!

Elyse Jones, Respiratory Nurse Educator

Reference List

Asthma and Respiratory Foundation of New Zealand. (2017). Summer Holiday Asthma and allergy checklist. Asthma and Respiratory Foundation of New Zealand. Retrieved from <https://s3-ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/assets.asthmafoundation.org.nz/documents/Summer-holiday-asthma-and-allergies-checklist.pdf>

Asthma and Respiratory Foundation of New Zealand. (December, 2016). Don't let asthma and allergies spoil the summer fun. Asthma and Respiratory Foundation of New Zealand. Retrieved from <https://www.asthmafoundation.org.nz/news-events/2016/dont-let-asthma-and-allergies-spoil-the-summer-fun>

Feek, B. (August, 2017). 2017: NZ's coldest winter since 2009. The New Zealand Herald. Retrieved from http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=11902412

The judge asked the defendant what he was charged with.
"Doing my Christmas shopping early," was the reply.
"That not illegal! How early were you shopping?"
"Before the store was open."



Thank you

We want to say a huge thank you to GSK pharmaceuticals and also The Sargood Bequest, who have supported our asthma bags project this year. These awesome little bags are given to every child that is referred to us, as a safe place to keep their medications, spacer and Asthma Action Plan. The idea is the bag goes wherever the child goes so that they have with them what they need at all times. These bags have been a huge hit with families.

Awareness Week



Daphne and Susan from Rauawaawa
Kaumātua Charitable Trust

We had a great response by businesses during awareness week in September to help with the sticker campaign. Take-away coffees around the Waikato had our sticker on the lid, and pharmacy bags were sealed with our sticker instead of cellotape. A huge thank you to all the participating businesses who helped with this campaign but also those that agreed to have one of our donation collectors for us during the year. This has been a great way to raise awareness. Alongside this, Rauawaawa Kaumātua Charitable Trust and Hamilton Plunket also had displays in their centres to raise awareness of asthma and Asthma Waikato.

Thank you to our all our supporters and sponsors

Without the generous support of these organisations throughout 2017, Asthma Waikato would not be able to function. We are so grateful! Thank you!



plus...

Parkwood Tui Medical pharmacy, Raglan Pharmacy, Hillcrest Pharmacy, Gothenburg, Hazel Hayes, Machina, Columbus, FastLane Café, Tui Medical Centre Te Rapa, Pharmacy on Meade, Pharmacy 547, Five Crossroad Pharmacy, Plus 91 Café, Palmers Planet - café Unichem Rototuna, Tui Med Rototuna, Beerescourt Life Pharmacy, Paper Plus Rototuna, Punnet, Two Birds Eatery, Steve Outram, Kris Wade from Crafty Kris

Closure Dates!

Christmas 2017

We will close on
Thursday December 21st
and will reopen on **Monday**
January 15th 2018.

Asthma
Waikato

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Kiwis of all ages are dying from asthma each year!
You can help save their lives by supporting us to educate and prevent this happening...



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