

# WINTER WELLNESS

*A Message from a Member of our Nursing Team*

**My name is Ruth Morrow and I am a Respiratory Nurse Specialist at the Asthma Society of Ireland. One of the patient support services we provide is a nurse-led WhatsApp messaging service, which I run together with my colleague Sam.**

I am so aware of the challenges people with asthma face as we go through the Winter months, including children with asthma. Winter can be a very challenging time for both adults and children with asthma due to the cold and foggy weather, increased air pollution, and increased exposure to cold and flu viruses. This year, in particular, we are seeing adults and children with asthma hard-hit by respiratory infections and this is having a knock-on impact on their asthma management.

One of the most common questions we are asked at this time of year is about managing asthma during an infection or when you get a cold. Managing your triggers and talking to a healthcare professional about adjusting your medication can help greatly in preventing a flare up of your asthma.

Parents regularly contact us about their children's asthma or their child's wheeze – either on our Adviceline for a nurse appointment or through our WhatsApp messaging service. This can be a very worrying and confusing time for parents and we try to allay those fears and provide them with information so they can look after their child's asthma.

**Here are eight Winter-ready actions I encourage you to take – these might save your life:**

- 1. Complete your Asthma Action Plan with your GP, consultant or our asthma nurse team**
- 2. Make your Asthma Action Plan a part of your daily life - stick it on your fridge**
- 3. Take a photo of your Asthma Action Plan - save it on your phone for when you need it**
- 4. Keep the 5 Step Rule wallet card from this support pack with you and use the QR code to view the video – share it with your asthma tribe**
- 5. Use the symptom tracker to boost your understanding of how your symptoms flare – this can help you spot early if you are getting worse**
- 6. Sign up to be a (free) member of the Asthma Society or register for our e-newsletter to get regular seasonal hints and tips**
- 7. Talk to two friends and family members about your asthma and how it impacts on your life – build your own supportive asthma tribe!**
- 8. Send a message to our WhatsApp service to get ongoing support or phone our Adviceline for a nurse appointment**

It can be confusing to know how to use your inhaler correctly, especially if you have been prescribed different kinds of inhalers. Using WhatsApp, we can send you videos on how to use your inhalers and how to manage your asthma triggers. You can then save these or other key asthma management materials straight on to your phone so that you have them when you need them.

I can be contacted on the **WhatsApp messaging service at 086 059 0132.**

Wishing you a healthy and safe Winter ahead,

Yours sincerely,

**Ruth Morrow** - Respiratory Nurse Specialist



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## A Message from our CEO

**My name is Sarah O'Connor and I am the CEO of the Asthma Society of Ireland.**

I hope that you find this Winter Wellness Support Pack to be helpful to you, your family and your wider asthma tribe. We have included a number of materials to help and support you this Winter.

I thank GSK Ireland for their support in printing and distributing this Winter Wellness Support Pack and I also thank Colet for telling us her story and helping us understand how important Winter Wellness has been in her asthma management journey. On behalf of the Asthma Society team, I thank you so much for your help and support since we were founded nearly 50 years ago. **I especially thank you for your engagement and help since the pandemic hit, when we have been reliant on donations from members of the public like yourself to survive as a charity.**

We have shared the Christmas Children's Activity booklet with you because we know through our services that this year has been particularly hard for children with asthma and their parents and carers. The booklet is designed to help a child to understand their asthma, to act as a conversation-starter, and to build their own supportive asthma tribe, so we can keep every child with asthma safe.

If you don't have a child with asthma in your family, please do share with someone who does this Christmas – one in ten children have asthma right now, and one in five children will experience it at some point in their childhood. **This could be one good deed you do this Christmas that makes a big difference to a child, and it could even save a child's life.**

In 2022, we plan to have a major focus on children with asthma. Children with asthma will be our Asthma Awareness Week campaign theme and we are also seeking donations and funding in 2022 to expand our Safe Schools programme.

I am asking you to consider supporting us by becoming an ongoing member of our asthma tribe, or by giving us a one-off gift using the donation form attached, or through our website or by phoning us. Your gift of €100 could help us make one school Asthma Safe – we can train a teacher to manage an asthma attack in their school and ensure that the school has an emergency inhaler available in case a child needs it.

Your gift of €500 could make four schools Asthma Safe, but could also provide 100 individual children with materials to boost their asthma awareness and to help their parents better understand how to manage their asthma.

Please do get in touch to update us with any change to your address or contact details or to let us know if you no longer wish to receive communications from the Asthma Society. We will make any updates necessary immediately.

**As a respiratory charity supporting patients throughout a global respiratory pandemic, our services have never been busier and we have never been more needed. We have also never been so hard-pressed financially to deliver our services with so few resources. We thank you for every effort you make to support people with asthma in Ireland.**

I am wishing you a happy and healthy Christmas (and Winter),

Yours, in appreciation,

Sarah O'Connor



asthma.ie

CHY no: 6100



SCAN ME TO  
**DONATE**  
GO TO  
[asthma.ie/donate](https://asthma.ie/donate)  
OR CALL  
**01 817 8886**

\* If you have experienced an asthma or respiratory bereavement (including relating to COVID-19), our thoughts and our hearts are with you and we hope that this Winter Wellness Support Pack does not cause you any additional distress. You can always feel free to get in touch to talk to us about your experience.