



iCAN News & Views

iCAN Vision

"I CAN control my asthma now!" Asthma need not prevent anyone, especially children, from doing all the things they like to do.

Our brochure, "Control Asthma Now! What You Need to Know to Manage Your Asthma," is available from our office. Call us at 202-3479 or send an e-mail to ican@calgaryhealthregion.ca. You can also view all our materials online at www.calgaryhealthregion.ca/ican.

The Child Asthma Network (iCAN) is a three-year Alberta Health and Wellness Health Innovation Fund community-focused demonstration project to improve asthma management for children in the Calgary and Headwaters Health Regions by connecting family physicians, pharmacists, schools, fire stations and community groups.

If you wish to be placed on the iCAN News & Views electronic mailing list, please let us know by sending us an e-mail at: ican@calgaryhealthregion.ca

Asthma & Allergies – What's the Connection?

Question: Can allergies worsen asthma?

Dr. Tim Vander Leek: Definitely! If you are continuously exposed to one of your allergic triggers, your asthma will be more severe, and you will likely require more medications to control your symptoms. Many people who are exposed to a pet or other allergen continuously will not experience the immediate symptoms (for example, hay fever, wheezing), but this does not mean that they are not allergic. This is because constant exposure will contribute to inflammation in the airways of your lungs, and inflammation causes asthma symptoms. This constant exposure also makes it more likely for you to experience more severe symptoms when you are exposed to other triggers (an additive effect). Intermittent exposure to allergic triggers can cause immediate, and occasionally severe, asthma symptoms. All allergic triggers that have been identified should be avoided, so that your asthma is milder and easier to control on less medications.

Dr. Vander Leek is an allergist/immunologist currently in private practice in Calgary, AB.

Asthma Medication Update

Newly Marketed "Combination" Drugs

The most recent combination medications on the market for asthma are **Symbicort** and **Advair**. A combination medication marries a "preventer" (corticosteroid) and a "controller" medication (a long-acting beta2 agonist or LABA). If you need to take both medications, you may find it more convenient to take them in one device.

It is important to remember, however, that inhaled corticosteroids, whether on their own or in combination, are still the primary preventers for asthma. Talk to your doctor or your pharmacist if you have any questions about your asthma medication.

"Ozone Friendly" Asthma Medications

Asthma medications are becoming more ozone friendly. Some metered dose inhalers now use Hydrofluoralkane (HFA) instead of the more damaging Chlorofluorocarbon (CFC). Devices such as the Diskus and Turbuhaler are ozone friendly by their design – they contain only the medication in a dry powder form, without any carrier agents. Ask your doctor or your pharmacist if your asthma medication is available in a more ozone-friendly form.

AIM – Achieving Improved Measurement

The iCAN project participated in the Calgary Health Region 2002 Accreditation Survey in early May. We applied the Community Health Standards of practice to the planning, design and delivery of our community initiatives. The surveyors' report is due back in mid summer and we will keep you posted. They did comment that our passion for the project was evident!

Thank You Physicians

A sincere thank you to our family physicians who share the iCAN vision to provide best-practice asthma care to patients, parents and families. Working with asthma educators and project leaders, these physicians are helping us develop shared-care models in their offices, within a community team model that will include pharmacies, schools and fire stations. Way to go!

Dr. Leonard L. Aldridge
Dr. Heather Armson
Dr. Michele Benedictson
Dr. Michal Broniewski
Dr. F. Dean Collett
Dr. Patricia L. Connick
Dr. Rodney Crutcher
Dr. Lori B. Dixon
Dr. Charlene Dunn
Dr. Joan Horton
Dr. Yolanda Kao
Dr. Brian Liggett
Dr. Joan Meldrum
Dr. Marie B. Patton
Dr. Ernesto Pineda-Selva
Dr. Kerryon Roberge
Dr. Lois Silvester
Dr. Mark Sosnowski
Dr. Rose Marie Geonzon
Dr. Pat Waymouth



iCAN LEARN! A New Asthma Web Site!

On May 7, 2002, World Asthma Day, iCAN launched a new Web site for children with asthma and their families at a special party at Alberta Children's Hospital. Log on to our new site at www.calgaryhealthregion.ca/ican. We worked closely with Kryos Systems, Cathy Smey Carston and the children at the Mount Royal College Day Care and are very proud to present a special animated short story for young children about living with asthma at www.calgaryhealthregion.ca/ican/kids_story.html. Parents can view basic asthma information, print helpful asthma tools and link to many other asthma resources. Later this summer we will animate proper asthma device technique – stay tuned!

Coming Soon

Pharmacists

Coming soon to a pharmacy near you, perhaps. We will be recruiting community pharmacists in close proximity to our iCAN physician partners over the summer months. Watch for a list of our pharmacy partners in our next newsletter.

Elementary Schools

We are in discussions with the various school boards to identify 3 – 6 elementary schools in close proximity to our physician partners that are interested in working with iCAN and the public health nurses who work in schools on an “early identification of asthma” project.

High River

iCAN team members will be working with the Headwaters Health Region to introduce the Calgary asthma initiatives currently underway. We hope to have a presence in High River in late 2002.

Fire Stations

Once elementary schools are identified, we look forward to providing asthma educational information in a unique venue with special appeal for young children – your community fire station.

Network Council

Charting the future of asthma care in the Calgary Health Region, the Network Council will bring the stakeholders in asthma care in Calgary together for the first time this Fall.

iCAN Key Contacts

Dr. Wendy Tink, Regional Clinical Department Head, Family Medicine

Dr. Sheldon Spier, Respiriologist and Head, Asthma Clinic, Alberta Children's Hospital

Shirley van de Wetering, Project Manager

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Asthma Resources

There are many places that provide information about asthma. You may find the following list helpful:

- **Child Asthma Network (iCAN)**
(403) 202-3479
www.calgaryhealthregion.ca/ican
- **Alberta Children's Hospital Asthma Clinic**
(403) 229-7328 (By Physician Referral)
www.calgaryhealthregion.ca/ican/commlinks_asthmaclinic.html
- **Calgary Asthma Program (CAP)**
Programs at Foothills, Peter Lougheed and Rockyview Hospitals
(403) 220-8742
www.ucalgary.ca/md/asthma
- **Calgary Allergy Network**
(403) 257-3173
www.calgaryallergy.ca
- **Calgary Asthma Awareness Society**
(403) 283-1333, ext. 235
www.ab.lung.ca/caas
- **Asthma Society of Canada**
1-800-787-3880
www.asthma.ca
- **Alberta Lung Association**
Health Education Line 1-800-661-5864
www.ab.lung.ca
- **Alberta Asthma Centre (Edmonton)**
(780) 407-3178
www.asthmacentre.org