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## Supernanny Helps Kids with Asthma

Asthma

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## The Supernanny Tackles Asthma



By Stephanie Tweitto Jacob

She can tackle any parenting challenge – bedtime tantrums, strong aversions to vegetables, even hair-pulling and biting – and now Supernanny Jo Frost is bringing a sigh of relief to parents raising children with [asthma](#).

Frost, who has spent more than 15 years helping families, has teamed up with nonprofit family health organization, [Allergy & Asthma Network Mothers of Asthmatics \(AANMA\)](#) and pharmaceutical company Merck & Co., Inc. to launch [Time2TalkAsthma.com](#), an educational online resource for parents of kids with asthma.

It turns out the nanny herself was diagnosed with the condition at the age of five. "It was important for me to get involved with this campaign because asthma is personal to my heart," she said. "And as a family advocate it was important to help parents realize that they can be in control of asthma and learn to live with it successfully." AOL Health spoke with Frost about her own asthma struggles and her advice for [caregivers](#) of children with the condition.



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To successfully manage your asthma, you need to avoid your triggers and be ready for an attack.

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## **AOL Health: What is the number one thing parents who have a child with asthma should do?**

**Jo Frost:** First and foremost, it's critical to go to their local practitioner to diagnose asthma if you think that's what your child has.

Time2TalkAsthma.com has information on the signs. I coughed a lot and was wheezy as a child. As a parent, if you're very observant you can see things that trigger it, like a change in seasons or an allergic reaction to animals. You have to look at those signs, recognize things, and get the correct medication.

## **AOL Health: What is the biggest mistake parents of children with asthma tend to make?**

**Frost:** They'll stop their child from doing anything. The question I get asked most is, 'Can my child participate in sports? Do I have to stop them from doing things they want to do?' And the answer is 'no.' You have to make sure to have the child's medication, be sure they are taking it regularly, and that you are having a three-way conversation between yourself, your child, and their practitioner.

## **AOL Health: After being diagnosed when you were five years old, what did your parents do to help you face your condition?**

**Frost:** The most important thing was language. "You can't" was never an option. Instead, it was "you can achieve anything with asthma." We had talks that were relevant to the age I was about understanding the medication I would take and concentrating on an action plan. Language was incredibly important. What we say and do makes a massive impact on children.

## **AOL Health: What was it like growing up with asthma?**

**Frost:** I grew up very active. I was always on my bike, roller skates or tricycle and playing sports like netball, which is like basketball in the UK. I had a normal childhood and at the same time my parents kept up conversations with our doctor. I was raised knowing I had asthma, but it was just, 'Oh, I've got asthma.' It didn't stop me. That young child at the age of five has become a woman that's been around America quite a few times now helping families. And I will continue to help them.

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**AOL Health: And what is it like, now, as an adult?**

**Frost:** It's controlled. I know when I need medication and when I don't. I see the doctors here in America and in the UK and I continue to do what I want to do. Last month I was in Arizona looking at Camelback Mountain and said, 'I want to climb it.' So I had my medications in my pocket the whole time and slowly but surely I got to the top of it. When you understand what you have, educate yourself, and know what you can do to help yourself, the sky is the limit.

**AOL Health: You spend so much time caring for others, how do you take care of your own health?**

**Frost:** I make time for myself. It's a priority for me. I have a demanding, heavy schedule. I spend long hours with these families, so my time is five o'clock in the morning. I go and have a workout – I lift weights, I do cardio, and then I go into work and help families.

**AOL Health: Five o'clock every morning?**

**Frost:** At the moment, every day. It's a must for me to keep healthy. I work very heavily at a mental and emotional level with families and exercise releases that.

Balance is incredibly important to me in my life and something I would encourage all parents to understand. You can only do so much and then you're left with no change in your purse – nothing left to give.

**AOL Health: Finding balance isn't always easy. Any tips?**

**Frost:** It's important to recognize it's always going to be difficult. It's something you'll continuously do your whole life. It's like you're standing on top of a seesaw and some weeks, for parents, it's tipping off because they've got a lot of deadlines at work. But once those deadlines are met, they have to get back to family during weekends and evenings. Parents who are all work and no family time – not even an hour when the kids get home from school – may say they're working hard for their two-week vacation, but you can't just live for your vacation. You have to create harmony within the family framework. And recognize that prioritizing family when you are at home has to be a priority to find balance.

**AOL Health: What can viewers expect from season six?**

**Frost:** We're going to be working with lots of different ages, from newborns to teenagers this season. It's going to be an unusual season. If there are people who'd like to come forth on [abc.com](http://abc.com) to apply to receive my help, my arms are open.

**AOL Health: How else can parents and caregivers tap into your super nanny powers?**

**Frost:** Go to the web site, [jofrost.com](http://jofrost.com). There's a wonderful forum there that allows me to interactively engage with parents worldwide. You can also speak to anybody in the world about a topic that's universal to so many parents. A lady asked for information and got it from mothers on the site quicker than she did from the service line in the UK.

[Supernanny](#) airs on ABC Fridays. Check your local listings for air times. You can also follow the Supernanny on [Twitter](#).



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