

ASTHMA FACTS

Asthma continues to be a serious public health problem. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

- An estimated 25.9 million people, including almost 7.1 million children, have asthma. ¹
- Asthma prevalence is higher among persons with family income below the poverty level. ²
- Almost 14 million people reported having an asthma attack in a recent government survey. ³
- Asthma accounts for more than 15 million physician office and hospital outpatient department visits, ^{4,5} and nearly 2 million emergency department visits each year. ⁶

African Americans continue to have higher rates of asthma emergency department visits, hospitalizations, and deaths than do Caucasians:

- The rate of emergency department visits is 330% higher. ³
- The hospitalization rate is 220% higher. ³
- The asthma death rate is 180% higher. ³

Approximately 3 million Hispanics in the U.S. have asthma and Puerto Ricans are disproportionately impacted:

- The rate of asthma among Puerto Ricans is 113% higher than non-Hispanic white people and 50% higher than non-Hispanic black people. ⁷
- The prevalence of asthma attacks is highest among Puerto Ricans. ²

Asthma in Children

- Asthma is one of the most common serious chronic diseases of childhood.
- Asthma is the third-ranking cause of hospitalization among children under 15. ⁸
- An average of one out of every 10 school-aged children has asthma. ⁹
- 10.5 million school days are missed each year due to asthma. ³

The Cost of Asthma

- The annual economic cost of asthma, including direct medical costs from hospital stays and indirect costs such as lost school and work days, amount to more than \$56 billion annually. ¹⁰

Environmental Factors

- Indoor and outdoor environmental factors can trigger asthma attacks: dust mites, molds, cockroaches, pet dander, and secondhand smoke.



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Asthma Can be Controlled

- With a plan that includes medical treatment and control of environmental triggers, people with asthma can lead healthy, active lives.

Asthma and the Environment

Research by EPA and others has shown that:

- Dust mites, molds, cockroaches, pet dander, and secondhand smoke trigger asthma attacks.
- Exposure to secondhand smoke can cause asthma in pre-school aged children.
- Exposure to dust mites can cause asthma.
- Ozone and particle pollution can cause asthma attacks.
 - When ozone levels are high, more people with asthma have attacks that require a doctor's attention.
 - Ozone makes people more sensitive to asthma triggers such as pet dander, pollen, dust mites, and mold.

Learn more at <http://www.epa.gov/asthma>

References

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