



ASTHMA FACTS

Asthma is a rapidly growing public health problem:

- Between 1980 and 1994, the prevalence of asthma in the U.S. increased 75% overall and 74% among children 5-14 years of age. *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*
- Over 20 million people, including 6.3 million children, have asthma. *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Environmental Health (2001)*
- 12 million people report having an asthma attack in the last year. *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*
- Asthma accounts for more than 10 million outpatient clinic visits, and nearly 2 million emergency department visits each year. *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*
- 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 125% higher.
 - The hospitalization rate is 220% higher.
 - The asthma death rate among African Americans is 200% higher.
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- Hispanics living with asthma report more asthma attacks and visits to emergency departments for asthma than non-Hispanic Caucasians. *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*
- Hispanics visit the doctor more frequently for urgent asthma care than do other ethnic groups. *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*
- Americans with lower income levels report higher asthma prevalence than those at higher income levels. *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*

Asthma in Children:

- The number of deaths related to asthma in children nearly tripled between 1979 and 1996. *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Environmental Health*
- Asthma is the most common serious chronic disease of childhood. *American Academy of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology*
- Asthma is the third-ranking cause of hospitalization among children under 15. *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Environmental Health*
- Asthma accounts for one-third of all pediatric emergency room visits and is the fourth most common cause of pediatric visits to the doctor's office. *U.S. Department of Health and Human Services*

Asthma in Children (*continued*):

- Asthma in children is the cause of almost five million physician visits and more than 200,000 hospitalizations. *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Environmental Health*
- An average of one out of every 13 school-age children has asthma. The percentages are rising more rapidly in preschool-age children than in any other group. *U.S. Department of Health and Human Services*
- Asthma is the leading cause of school absenteeism from a chronic childhood condition: 14 million school days are missed each year due to asthma. *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Environmental Health*

The Cost of Asthma:

- Annual expenditures for health and lost productivity due to asthma were \$14 billion in 2002. *National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute 2002 Chartbook*

Asthma and the Environment:

- Dust mites, molds, cockroaches, pet dander and secondhand smoke trigger asthma attacks. *National Academy of Sciences/Institute of Medicine*
- Exposure to secondhand smoke can cause asthma in pre-school aged children. *National Academy of Sciences/Institute of Medicine*
- Exposure to dust mites can cause asthma. *National Academy of Sciences/Institute of Medicine*
- Ozone and particle pollution can cause asthma attacks. *U.S. Environmental Protection Agency*
- When ozone levels are high, more people with asthma have attacks that require a doctor's attention or use of medication. One reason this happens is that ozone makes people more sensitive to allergens such as pet dander, pollen, dust mites, and mold, which are common triggers of asthma attacks. *U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (Air Quality Index: A Guide to Air Quality and Your Health EPA 454/K-03-002, August 2003)*