



ASTHMA FACTS

Asthma is a rapidly growing public health problem. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

- 20 million people, including 6.1 million children, have asthma.
 - Asthma prevalence is higher among families with lower incomes.
- 12 million people report having an asthma attack in the past year.
- Asthma accounts for more than 14 million outpatient clinic visits, and nearly 2 million emergency department visits each year.
- 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 380% higher.
 - The hospitalization rate is 225% higher.
 - The asthma death rate is 200% higher.
- Approximately 2 million Hispanics in the U.S. have asthma and Puerto Ricans are disproportionately impacted:
 - The rate of asthma among Puerto Ricans is 80% higher than non-Hispanic whites.
 - The prevalence of asthma attacks is highest among Puerto Ricans.

Asthma in Children:

- Asthma is the most common serious chronic disease of childhood.
- Asthma is the third-ranking cause of hospitalization among children under 15.
- Asthma in children is the cause of almost five million physician visits and more than 200,000 hospitalizations.
 - 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.
- An average of one out of every 13 school-aged child has asthma.
- Asthma is the leading cause of school absenteeism from a chronic childhood condition.
 - 14.7 million school days are missed each year due to asthma.

The Cost of Asthma:

- Annual expenditures for health and lost productivity due to asthma are estimated at \$16 billion, according to the National Heart Lung and Blood Institute.

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.