



# ASTHMA FACTS

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

- About 23 million people, including 6.8 million children, have asthma. <sup>1</sup>
  - \* Asthma prevalence is higher among families with lower incomes.
- 12 million people report having an asthma attack in the past year. <sup>2</sup>
- Asthma accounts for nearly 17 million physician office and hospital visits, <sup>3</sup> and nearly 2 million emergency department visits each year. <sup>2</sup>
- 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 350% higher. <sup>2</sup>
  - \* The hospitalization rate is 240% higher. <sup>2</sup>
  - \* The asthma death rate is 200% higher. <sup>2</sup>
- Approximately 2 million Hispanics in the U.S. have asthma and Puerto Ricans are disproportionately impacted:
  - The rate of asthma among Puerto Ricans is 125% higher than non-Hispanic white people and 80% higher than non-Hispanic black people. <sup>2</sup>
  - The prevalence of asthma attacks is highest among Puerto Ricans. <sup>2</sup>

## **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. <sup>4</sup>
- Asthma in children is the cause of seven million physician visits and nearly 200,000 hospitalizations.
- An average of one out of every 10 school-aged child has asthma. <sup>5</sup>
- 13 million school days are missed each year due to asthma. <sup>6</sup>

## **The Cost of Asthma:**

- Annual expenditures for health and lost productivity due to asthma are estimated at nearly \$20 billion, according to the National Heart Lung and Blood Institute. <sup>7</sup>



# ASTHMA FACTS

## 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 [www.epa.gov/asthma](http://www.epa.gov/asthma)

## References

1. Summary Health Statistics for U.S. Adults: National Health Interview Survey, 2006, Tables 3 and 4. [http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/series/sr\\_10/sr10\\_232.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/series/sr_10/sr10_232.pdf).
2. Akinbami L. Asthma Prevalence, Health Care Use and Mortality: United States 2003-2005. <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/products/pubs/pubd/hestats/ashtma03-05/asthma03-05.htm>.
3. National Ambulatory Medical Care Survey: 2006 Summary, Table 12 <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nhsr/nhsr003.pdf>.
4. DeFrances CJ, Cullen KA, Kozak LJ. National Hospital Discharge Survey: 2005 Annual Summary with Detailed Diagnosis and Procedure Data. National Center for Health Statistics. Vital Health Statistics 12 (165); 2007. [http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/series/sr\\_13/sr13\\_165.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/series/sr_13/sr13_165.pdf).
5. American Lung Association, Epidemiology and Statistics Unit, Research and Program Services. Trends in Asthma Morbidity and Mortality. November 2007. (ALA age group analysis of NHIS through 2005). [http://www.lungusa.org/atf/cf/%7B7a8d42c2-fcca-4604-8ade-7f5d5e762256%7D/ASTHMA\\_TREND\\_Nov2007.PDF](http://www.lungusa.org/atf/cf/%7B7a8d42c2-fcca-4604-8ade-7f5d5e762256%7D/ASTHMA_TREND_Nov2007.PDF).
6. Akinbami LJ. The State of Childhood Asthma, United States, 1980-2005, Advance Data from Vital and Health Statistics: no 381, Revised December 29, 2006, Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics, 2006 (NHIS 2003 absenteeism) <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/ad/ad381.pdf>.
7. National Heart; Lung and Blood Institute Chartbook on Cardiovascular, Lung and Blood Diseases, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Institute of Health, 2007. <http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/resources/docs/07-chtbk.pdf>.