ASTHMA FACT SHEET

The Scary Statistics

7.1 million
or 1 in 10 children have asthma¹

4.1 million
children suffered an asthma attack or episode in 2011¹

Children under age 15 visited the emergency room
774,000
times in 2011 due to asthma²

50%
increase in asthma rates for African American children from 2001 to 2009¹

Signs & Symptoms of Asthma

Shortness of breath: feeling out of breath or the inability to release all the air from lungs
Chest tightening: a sensation of a weight on the chest or squeezing
Wheeze: difficulty breathing with a squeaky, whistling noise
Coughing: usually worse at night and in the early morning, often making it difficult to sleep

Asthma Triggers at Home

Mold can grow on any surface (shower curtains, towels, floors, walls) in damp areas (bathrooms, basements). Keep these areas clean, dry and well-ventilated to avoid mold growth.

Dust mites are tiny bugs you can’t see. They live in fabrics like sheets, blankets, pillows, mattresses, furniture, carpets and stuffed animal toys. Use dust-proof covers for pillows and mattresses. Wash bedding and toys and vacuum weekly.

Smoke from cigarettes, pipes or cigars (including smoke breathed out by a smoker) and wood-burning stoves and fireplaces contain a mixture of harmful gases and small particles. Do not smoke in the home. To reduce smoke from stoves and fireplaces, only use dry, split wood. Have your chimney inspected and cleaned every year by a certified professional.

Cockroaches and other pests leave dander and droppings behind. Avoid clutter, cover trash cans, store food in airtight containers and clean up dishes, crumbs and spills immediately.

Pets like cats, dogs and other warm-blooded animals have dander. Keep pets out of bedrooms and off furniture. Vacuum often.

Nitrogen dioxide is an odorless gas from the use of appliances (stove, space heaters) that burn fuels (gas, kerosene). Do not use ovens to heat the home. Make sure appliances that burn fuel properly vent outside the home.

Chemical irritants (VOCs) found in everyday household products like cleaning items (scented or unscented), paint, adhesive, pesticides, cosmetics and air fresheners irritate airways. Switch to VOC-free products. When in use, keep area well-ventilated by opening windows and turning on exhaust fans.
Did You Know?

Likely Effects of Asthma in Children

• Children with asthma are more likely to be overweight and obese than children without asthma.³
• Even when asthma symptoms are not severe enough to require urgent care, they can interfere with a child’s ability to sleep, play and participate at school.⁴

Societal Implications of Childhood Asthma

• Asthma is one of the leading causes of school absenteeism;³ in 2008, asthma accounted for an estimated 14.4 million lost school days in children with an asthma attack in the previous year.¹
• Asthma is the third leading cause of hospitalization among children under the age of 15. Approximately 29% of all asthma hospital discharges in 2009 were in those under 15, however only 21% of the U.S. population was less than 15 years old.⁶

Cost Savings from Asthma Health Education & Home-Based-Health Intervention

• Asthma has many triggers, including many found in the home (see reverse side). These home-based triggers cause 40% of asthma episodes and are entirely preventable.⁷
• The annual direct health care cost of asthma is approximately $50.1 billion; indirect costs (e.g. lost productivity) add another $5.9 billion, for a total of $56.0 billion dollars.⁸
• A 2004 study showed a savings of $11.22 in emergency department and hospitalization costs for every $1 spent to deliver asthma health education and home-based-health interventions.⁹

References

1 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: National Center for Health Statistics, National Health Interview Survey Raw Data, 2011. Analysis by the American Lung Association Research and Health Education Division using SPSS and SUDAAN software.
2 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: National Center for Health Statistics, National Hospital Ambulatory Medical Care Survey, 2009. Analysis by the American Lung Association Research and Health Education Division using SPSS software.
6 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: National Center for Health Statistics, National Hospital Discharge Survey, 1995-2010. Analysis by the American Lung Association Research and Health Education Division using SPSS software.

Get Help

Free Services Available to Eligible Families

• Health and safety assessment
• Asthma trigger reduction
• Pest management
• Mold remediation
• Asthma control education
• Home safety education
• Lead hazard reduction
• Energy efficiency upgrades
• Window and door replacement
• Weatherization
• Legal services
• Tenants’ rights assistance
• Housing Choice Voucher program

For help or more information, please contact:

Green & Healthy Homes Initiative

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The Coalition to End Childhood Lead Poisoning (CECLP) launched Green & Healthy Homes Initiative (GHHI) in 2009, expanding its services to deliver holistic health and energy-based housing interventions. CECLP is doing business as GHHI and guarantees all work of GHHI.