



Asthma Facts and Figures

Asthma causes swelling of the airways. This results in narrowing of the airways that carry air from the nose and mouth to the lungs. Allergens or irritating things entering the lungs trigger asthma symptoms. Symptoms include trouble breathing, wheezing, coughing and tightness in the chest. Asthma can be deadly.

- There is no cure for asthma, but it can be managed with proper prevention of asthma attacks and treatment.
- More Americans than ever before have asthma. It is one of this country's most common and costly diseases.

How Common Is Asthma?

- Approximately 25 million Americans have asthma. This equals to about 1 in 13 Americans, including 8 percent of adults and 7 percent of children.¹
- About 20 million U.S. adults age 18 and over have asthma.¹
- Asthma is more common in adult women than adult men.¹
- It is the leading chronic disease in children.² Currently, there are about 5.1 million children under the age of 18 with asthma.¹
- Asthma is more common in boys than girls.¹

What Are the Rates of Asthma Episodes in Children?

- In 2019, 44.3 percent of children age 18 and younger who had asthma reported having one or more asthma attacks in the past year.¹
 - About 47.2 percent of children under the age of 5 with asthma had an episode.¹
- According to the CDC, asthma episodes in children have declined from 2001 through 2016.³

How Many People Get Sick from Asthma?

- In 2016, asthma accounted for for 9.8 million doctor's office visits⁴
- In 2018, asthma accounted for 178,530 discharges from hospital inpatient care and 1.6 million emergency department visits.^{5,6}
- Black Americans are five times more likely than white Americans to visit the emergency department due to asthma.⁶

How Many People Die from Asthma?

- On average, ten Americans die from asthma each day. In 2019, 3,524 people died from asthma. Many of these deaths are avoidable with proper treatment and care.⁷
- Adults are five times more likely to die from asthma than children.⁷
- Women are more likely to die from asthma than men, and boys are more likely than girls.⁷
- Black Americans are nearly three times more likely to die from asthma than white Americans.⁷



What Are the Costs of Asthma?

- From 2008-2013, the annual economic cost of asthma was more than \$81.9 billion – including medical costs and loss of work and school days:⁸
 - \$3 billion in losses due to missed work and school days
 - \$29 billion due to asthma-related mortality, and
 - \$50.3 billion in medical costs
- The annual per-person incremental medical cost of asthma was \$3,266 (in 2015 U.S. dollars).⁸
- Among children ages 5 to 17, asthma is one of the top causes of missed school days. In 2013, it accounted for more than 13.8 million missed school days.⁹

Which Racial or Ethnic Groups Have Higher Asthma Rates?

- See AAFA's groundbreaking research report on [Asthma Disparities in America](#).
- Racial and ethnic differences in asthma frequency, illness and death are highly connected with poverty, city air quality, indoor allergens, not enough patient education and poor health care.
- The rate of asthma and the prevalence of asthma episodes is highest among Black Americans.¹
- Black children are three times as likely to have asthma compared to white children.¹
- Compared to white Americans, Black Americans are five times more likely to visit the emergency department due to asthma.⁶
- Black Americans are nearly three times more likely to die from asthma than white Americans⁷
- When sex is factored in, Black females have the highest rate of fatality due to asthma. In 2019, Black women were three times more likely to die from asthma than white men.⁷

Do Men or Women Have Higher Rates of Asthma?

- Women are more likely to have asthma than men. 9.8 percent of women have asthma, compared to 6.1 percent of men.¹
- Women are more likely to die from asthma than men.⁷
- Boys are more likely to have asthma than girls. 8.4 percent of boys have asthma, compared to 5.5 percent of girls.¹

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