

# Breathe IN Breathe OUT



# Asthma In Indiana

Fall/Winter 2008

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## *Special Topic*

### **Asthma and Preparedness**

The flooding that swept through Indiana this summer served as a good reminder that Hoosiers should be prepared for emergency situations. People with asthma and other chronic conditions may need to take additional precautions to make sure they can manage their disease during an emergency.

In addition to floods, Indiana residents should be prepared for tornadoes, earthquakes, thunderstorms, extreme heat, winter storms, pandemic influenza and man made threats (nuclear, chemical and biological). In an emergency, you may have to evacuate the area, be confined to your home, and/or be cut off from basic services like water, electricity and telephone. Relief workers may be overwhelmed and may not be able to reach you immediately.

Taking simple steps now to have an emergency plan and disaster kit ready to go will help you and your family remain calm. For people with asthma, disaster plans can help ensure access to medicines. They also help prepare families for the increased allergens and irritants that accompany many

emergencies and create even greater problems for people with asthma.

For example, mold is a very common problem in the aftermath of a flood. Wildfires and/or terrorist attacks like September 11<sup>th</sup> may bring smoke and increased particulate matter to the air. Pandemic flu is also a greater concern because people with asthma are more likely to have complications from influenza.

The Allergy & Asthma Network Mothers of Asthmatics recently focused their *Live Smarter, Not*



*Photo courtesy of Columbus Regional Hospital*

*Harder Challenge* on helping people with asthma and allergies stock up on what they may need during a disaster. The Indiana State Department of Health and Department of Homeland Security also have suggestions for preparing a disaster plan and emergency supplies. Here are some of their tips on preparing for an emergency and what to include in your disaster kit.

### General Tips

- Create an evacuation kit (see below for suggested contents) and keep it in a cool and dry place. It can also be helpful for children to have an evacuation kit at school in case the disaster happens during school hours and you cannot get to them immediately.
- Choose a family meeting place. You may have different meeting places for different types of disasters. Have an out of state contact that everyone in your family will contact if separated during an emergency.
- To prepare for evacuation, pick at least one location where you may take shelter. This should be far enough away so it is not affected by a local or regional disaster. Identify physicians, hospitals and pharmacies nearby these locations.
- Make a plan for your pets. If you evacuate, you may not be able to return and most shelters do not allow pets.
- Keep a detailed map at home and in the car to help with evacuation routes. Remember that some roads may not be accessible during a disaster.
- If you rely on an electric nebulizer, notify your power company or look into a battery operated machine. Your power company may be able to notify you before planned outages or provide other services.

### Disaster Kit Contents

- A three-day supply of water and food that will not spoil. One gallon of water per person per day is recommended for drinking and sanitary purposes. If food allergies trigger your asthma, make sure to pack allergen-free foods.
- General first aid kit.
- Prescription medications and equipment (i.e. inhalers, spacers, nebulizers and peak flow meters). Make sure to check the expiration date and the number of doses remaining. Preparing for at least two weeks is a good rule of thumb since you may be exposed to more triggers and require more medication than normal.
- Copies of prescriptions, your asthma action plan and basic medical records as you may not be able to contact your doctor or pharmacy immediately.
- Battery-powered radio and flashlights with extra batteries.
- Face masks and goggles.
- Clothing, blankets, and sleeping bags.
- Extra set of car keys and a credit card, cash, or traveler's checks. Remember, banks may be closed and because of power outages ATM and credit card machines may not be available.
- Copies of important documents (i.e. insurance policies, identification, bank accounts).
- Matches in a waterproof container.
- Sanitation supplies.
- Special items for infant, elderly, or disabled family members.

Remember that disasters can happen at any time, and you may not have advanced warning. Even if a disaster is not in the immediate area, you may still be impacted. Smoke and debris have small particles that can travel miles and create problems for people who do not consider themselves at risk. Make sure your family is prepared before a disaster strikes.

### Resources for Preparedness

#### Indiana Department of Homeland Security

Disaster Plan: <http://www.in.gov/dhs/2779.htm>

Disaster Kit: <http://www.in.gov/dhs/2783.htm>

#### Indiana State Department of Health

Preparedness: <http://www.in.gov/isdh/17862.htm>

Pandemic Flu: <http://www.in.gov/isdh/23154.htm>

#### American Red Cross

<http://www.redcross.org>

<http://www.Prepare.org>

<http://www.redcross.org/preparedness>

Merritt, D. (2008). What's Your Contingency Plan? *Allergy & Asthma Today*, 6(1), 15-18.

# Data and Surveillance

## Patients Hospitalized for Asthma Indiana, 2005

The hospital discharge data the Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH) receives from the Indiana Hospital Association does not include patient identifiers. Therefore, hospitalization data reported in *The Burden of Asthma in Indiana: Second Edition, March 2008 (Burden Report)* are based on the number of discharge events, not patients.

To answer questions such as “how many people were hospitalized for asthma more than once a year”, the ISDH developed a method to calculate rates and numbers of *patients* hospitalized for asthma. The assumption was made that if two or more discharge events had the same date-of-birth, sex, race and ZIP code the probability that information belonged to the same patient would be very high.

The following is a summary of the *patient-level* data calculated for 2005 hospitalizations. The full report and methodology can be found at: <http://www.in.gov/isdh/17279.htm>

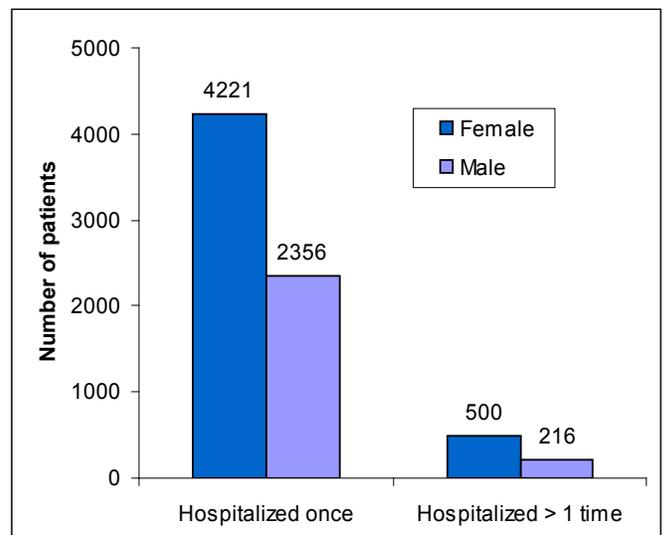
- 7,293 unique patients were associated with the 8,302 hospitalizations in Indiana, 2005. Of the 7,293 patients, 65% were females and 35% were males, 74% were adults (18 years and older) and 26% were children (17 years and younger).

Patients	Frequency	%
Females	4,721	64.7
Males	2,572	35.3
Adults (18+)	5,374	73.7
Children ( 0-17)	1,919	26.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,293</b>	

- The age-specific hospitalization rates per 10,000 residents were similar for adults and children (11.5 and 12 respectively).

- Females had the highest asthma hospitalization rates regardless if they were white or black. Black females had the highest hospitalization rate (26.6 per 10,000).
- The asthma hospitalization rate for blacks (23.3 per 10,000) was more than two times higher than the rate for whites (9.4 per 10,000).
- Of the 7,293 patients hospitalized due to asthma, 6,577 (90.2%) were hospitalized once and 716 (9.8%) were hospitalized more than once.
- Of the 716 patients hospitalized two or more times due to asthma, the majority (76%) were hospitalized twice and 24% were hospitalized between three and ten times.
- More adults (18 years and older) were hospitalized due to asthma when compared to children (0-17 years), regardless if they were hospitalized once (4,798 adults vs. 1,779 children) or more than once (576 adults vs. 140 children).
- Females were hospitalized approximately two times more due to asthma than males regardless if they were hospitalized once or more than once.

### Number of Patients Hospitalized Once and More Than Once Due to Asthma by Sex, Indiana, 2005



# *Around the State*

## **U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region V**

### ***Grant Awarded for Work with Delaware County***

The Indiana State Department of Health's (ISDH) Asthma Program was awarded an \$80,000 U.S. EPA Region V grant to address asthma and environmental tobacco smoke. The ISDH Asthma Program will partner with the Delaware County Health Department and other community partners. The project's activities will include home assessments to identify and manage indoor environmental asthma triggers for families of children with asthma and implementation of the Essentials for Healthy Homes Practitioners Course. This course is available from the National Center for Healthy Housing.

### ***Northeast Indiana Community Health Initiative***

The U.S. EPA Region V is starting a new project entitled the Northeast Indiana Community Health Initiative. The goal is to bolster local efforts to protect the community from air pollution in the ambient and indoor environments. The initiative will focus on the following 18 counties: Adams, Allen, Blackford, Dekalb, Delaware, Elkhart, Grant, Huntington, Jay, Kosciusko, Lagrange, Madison, Noble, Randolph, Steuben, Wabash, Wells, and Whitley. Region V has previously conducted a similar initiative in the West Michigan Area. The project is still in early planning phases for Northeast Indiana, but Region V has engaged asthma partners at the state and local level.

## **Indiana Tobacco Quitline**

The Indiana Tobacco Quitline (1-800-QUIT-NOW) is a free telephone-based cessation service designed to help all Indiana tobacco users quit. Tobacco use and secondhand smoke can be especially troublesome for those with asthma or those living in the same house as someone with asthma. The Quitline also offers a Fax Referral Program to assist health care providers in supporting smoking cessation among their patients. For more information, visit <http://www.indianatobaccoquitline.net/>

# *InJAC Update*

## **Black & Minority Health Fair**

Thank you to the following volunteers for representing InJAC and AAI at the Black and Minority Health Fair: Robin Costley, Lisa Cauldwell, Vicki Reed, Hesam Lahsae, Elizabeth Hamilton-Byrd, Marcie Memmer and Trisha Dane. Over 37,000 people visited the health fair this year. Visitors to the asthma booth had the opportunity to play the 'Asthma Challenge' and pick up educational materials, magnets and bookmarks from the print campaign and asthma activities for children.

## **501(c)(3) Status**

InJAC has started the process to obtain 501(c)(3) status. This status classifies InJAC as a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization. One of the benefits of 501(c)(3) is InJAC will be able to accept donations and apply for grants to fund projects. The cost for this process is \$360. Improving Kids' Environment has graciously agreed to help accept donations for this cause. Anyone wishing to donate should write checks to Improving Kids' Environment. **Please clearly indicate in the memo section that the donation is for InJAC.** Checks can be mailed to: Improving Kids' Environment, 3951 N. Meridian St., Ste. 160, Indianapolis, IN 46208. Questions about the process can be directed to Kathy Such at [ksuch@lungin.org](mailto:ksuch@lungin.org).

## **Indiana Asthma Resource Guide**

The Public Education Workgroup has created an Asthma Resource Guide. The guide is intended to help connect Hoosiers with resources to learn more about asthma and the asthma services available in the community. Resources are categorized as: General Information on Asthma, Toll Free Numbers for Asthma Questions, Local Asthma Programs and Resources, Environmental Components of Asthma, Asthma Activities for Children, Health Insurance and Asthma Care Providers. The guide can currently be accessed in pdf form at [http://www.in.gov/isdh/files/Asthma\\_Resource\\_Guide\\_August\\_2008.pdf](http://www.in.gov/isdh/files/Asthma_Resource_Guide_August_2008.pdf). The guide will also be added to [www.InJAC.org](http://www.InJAC.org) as the site is developed. If you have additional resources to add, please contact Trisha Dane at [tdane@isdh.in.gov](mailto:tdane@isdh.in.gov).

# Upcoming Events

## October 15: INShape 2008 Health Summit Healthy Schools, Healthy Indiana

Indiana University, Bloomington

9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Register online at <http://www.inshape2008.com/>

## October 15-16: Regional Air Quality Workshop

O'Hare International Center Auditorium in  
Rosemont, IL

Contact: Sarah Haug, (847) 720-7880 or

[haug@ladco.org](mailto:haug@ladco.org)

## November 5-6: Lead-Safe and Healthy Homes Conference

Marten House, Indianapolis

<http://www.ikecoalition.org>

Contact: Janet McCabe, (317) 902-3610 or

[mccabe@ikecoalition.org](mailto:mccabe@ikecoalition.org)

## October 13-14: Indiana Primary Health Care Association Conference

The Many Facets of Primary Health Care

Marriott Indianapolis North

[http://www.indianapca.org/eventscalendar/annual\\_conference\\_2.html](http://www.indianapca.org/eventscalendar/annual_conference_2.html)

## November 6-11: American College of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology Annual Meeting

Seattle, WA

Register online at: [http://www.acaai.org/Member/Annual\\_Meeting/Annual+Meeting.htm#registration](http://www.acaai.org/Member/Annual_Meeting/Annual+Meeting.htm#registration)

## November 11: School/Student Nurse Asthma Expo

Andorffer Commons, IIT in Fort Wayne, IN

3:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Contact: Brett Aschliman, (260) 415-9294

## December 4-6: Indoor Air Quality Tools for Schools National Symposium

Washington, DC

Register online at [https://www.iaqsymposium.com/Registration\\_Login.aspx](https://www.iaqsymposium.com/Registration_Login.aspx)

## December 11: InJAC Quarterly Meeting

ISDH, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor Conference Room

1:30 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Contact: Kathy Such, (317) 819-1181 x221 or

[ksuch@lungin.org](mailto:ksuch@lungin.org)

Please submit future events to Trisha Dane at (317) 233-7793 or [tdane@isdh.in.gov](mailto:tdane@isdh.in.gov).

## Asthma Program

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*Breathe In, Breathe Out: Asthma in Indiana* is a semi-annual newsletter published by the Indiana State Department of Health Asthma Program in conjunction with the Indiana Joint Asthma Coalition (InJAC). The purpose of this newsletter is to provide timely information on asthma to those interested in addressing the asthma burden in Indiana.

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