Asthma triggers
The cause of asthma is unknown, but people with asthma have inflamed airways which cause them to be more reactive and sensitive to triggers. Common triggers include:

- Pet hair or dander
- Changes in weather, usually cold weather
- Chemical irritants
- Cockroaches, dust mites and pests
- Exercise
- Food
- Mold
- Outdoor air pollutants and ozone
- Pollen
- Respiratory infections, such as the common cold
- Stress
- Tobacco and wood smoke

Emergency department (ED) visits
ED visits have increased among Indiana residents significantly since 2004, but leveled off during the past 3 years. During 2010:

- 30,192 people visited the ED with a principal diagnosis of asthma—a decrease of nearly 1,000 visits from 2009.
- The overall age-adjusted ED visit rate was 480.7 cases per 100,000 people.
- 38.0% of the asthma-related ED visits were among children.
- Black residents (1,297.9 per 100,000 people) visited the ED for asthma at a much higher rate than white residents (333.6 per 100,000 people).

Hospitalizations
While the rate of asthma-related hospitalizations in 2010 was the lowest since 2007, it was still the 4th leading cause of hospitalization due to illness among Indiana children under age 18. During 2010:

- 8,351 asthma-related hospitalizations occurred, down 8.7% from 2009.
- Overall, females had higher rates of hospitalization than males (153.1 versus 98.3 per 100,000 people); however, male children had higher rates than female children (172.2 versus 103.5 per 100,000 people).
- Black residents (351.4 per 100,000 people) were hospitalized nearly 4 times more often than white residents (94.4 per 100,000 people).

*Current asthma was measured by asking if the child/adult still had asthma*
Asthma

Mortality

- In 2009, 71 Indiana residents’ deaths had asthma listed as the underlying cause.
  - 31 were males and 40 were females
  - 46 were whites and 25 were blacks
  - 9 were children

Management among persons with current asthma

- Although asthma is rarely fatal, poorly controlled asthma can lead to missed school or work and the inability to participate in daily activities.
  - During 2006–2010, 60.5% of Indiana children had their usual activities limited due to their asthma, and 44.7% of school-aged children missed 1 or more days of school because of it.
  - In 2010, 34.7% of Indiana adults missed work or could not participate in daily activities due to their asthma.
- Creating an Asthma Action Plan is important in learning how to control asthma long-term and in recognizing early symptoms of an attack, yet only 28.6% of adults and 47.7% of children with asthma had an action plan during 2006–2010.
- Routinely seeing a health care provider is one way to manage one’s asthma. During 2006–2010, 50.0% of adults and 24.0% of children did not see their doctor for routine visits concerning their asthma.

Community resources

- Fly a Flag for Clean Air Program: a program for schools to create public awareness of outdoor air quality conditions so children can continue to play while protecting themselves.
- Indiana Joint Asthma Coalition (InJAC): a voluntary group of people and organizations working to reduce the burden of asthma in Indiana.
- For a list of asthma coalitions, programs and resources in Indiana, go to InJAC’s Resources page, or call the Indiana Family Helpline at 1-855-HELP-1ST (855-435-7178). Additional information can be found at the Asthma Community Network.
- To get help with tobacco cessation, call the Indiana Tobacco Quitline at 1-800-QUIT-NOW (800-784-8669), or visit www.quitnowindiana.com.
- AIRNow: an index for reporting daily air quality in local regions.
- Knozone: a program to improve Indianapolis’ air quality.

References


For additional information on the impact of asthma in Indiana, please visit: www.chronicdisease.isdh.in.gov