



Asthma In West Virginia

West Virginia Asthma Facts

In 2009, approximately 12% of West Virginia adults and 13% of West Virginia children have at some point been diagnosed with asthma by a health care professional. An estimated 8.8% (126,000) of adults and 8.5% (32,000) of children in West Virginia currently have asthma.¹

Although asthma is a controllable condition, many West Virginians with asthma experience complications that result in ER visits and hospitalization. These acute care visits are often preventable, yet they cost West Virginians millions of dollars each year.

In West Virginia:

- In 2008, it was reported that nearly 20% of adults with asthma visited an emergency room because of their asthma¹.
- There were 2,745 hospitalizations for asthma in 2008. Charges for these hospitalizations totaled almost \$26 million².
- Medicare, Medicaid, or other government programs were charged for 63% of the asthma hospitalizations in 2008.²

Addressing Asthma In West Virginia

The West Virginia Asthma Education and Prevention Program (WV-AEPP) and our network of partners from the West Virginia Asthma Coalition and the American Lung Association of West Virginia are dedicated to the goal of reducing the burden of asthma to the citizens of our state. If you would like to learn more about our asthma programs, contact WV-AEPP at (304) 558-0644 or www.wvasthma.org.

MANAGING YOUR ASTHMA

It is important to remember that your asthma can be controlled so that you can be healthy and active.

Here are some tips:

- > **Identify and avoid the triggers that can cause your asthma symptoms or attacks.** Common asthma triggers include dust mites, pet dander, mold, tobacco smoke, wood smoke, and exercise.
- > **Ask your doctor about developing an asthma action plan.** This tool helps to identify worsening asthma symptoms and outlines treatment as recommended by your physician.
- > **Tell you doctor about all of the medications you are taking.** Some asthma medications may make other health conditions worse, and some other medications may make your asthma worse.
- > **Be patient and honest with your doctor.** Sometimes it is difficult for doctors to determine whether lung and breathing problems in older people are due to asthma, other lung conditions such as bronchitis and emphysema, or heart disease. It may take time to find the best treatment for you.





Asthma & Seniors In West Virginia

West Virginia Asthma & Seniors Facts

Children are not the only people who have asthma. In the United States, 19.5 million adults have asthma, almost 3 million seniors aged 65 and older.¹

In 2009, approximately 7.9% of West Virginia seniors had asthma.¹ This equals nearly 23,000 West Virginians aged 65 and older.

Asthma is a controllable condition, yet many West Virginia seniors with asthma experience asthma-related complications that result in hospitalization and death.

- In 2008, there were 783 asthma hospitalizations among seniors, a rate of 27.5 hospitalizations per 10,000 seniors.²
- Since 2003, West Virginia seniors have been more likely than younger adults and children to be hospitalized for asthma.²
- Between 2000 and 2008, 134 West Virginia seniors died from asthma.³
- Senior women are more likely than senior men to be hospitalized for asthma and to die from asthma.^{2,3}

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Asthma & Women In West Virginia

West Virginia Asthma & Women Facts

Asthma is a common chronic disease among women. In fact, West Virginia women are just as likely to have asthma as they are to have diabetes, and asthma is more common among women than coronary heart disease, heart attack, and stroke.¹ In 2009, nearly 11% of West Virginia women currently had asthma. This equals about 84,000 women.¹

The prevalence of current asthma among adult women is almost two times higher than men in West Virginia.¹ Women are also more likely than men to experience asthma-related complications that result in hospitalization and death.

- In 2008, 22.0 asthma hospitalizations occurred per 10,000 West Virginia women aged 18 and older, compared with 7.0 per 10,000 males.²
- During the years 2000-2008, the asthma mortality rate was 7.0 per 100,000 among elderly women, compared with 3.0 per 100,000 among elderly men.³

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Childhood Asthma In West Virginia

West Virginia Childhood Asthma Facts

Nationally, asthma is one of the leading chronic diseases among children and causes more absence from school than any other chronic disease.¹ Approximately 13% or 47,000 West Virginians under the age of 18 have at some point been diagnosed with asthma by a health care professional.² It is estimated that in 2009, 8.5% or 32,000 West Virginia children currently had asthma.²

Asthma is a controllable condition. Yet, many West Virginia children with asthma experience asthma-related symptoms and complications.

- Approximately 60% of children under the age of 18 and 43% of public high school students with asthma had an asthma attack in the past 12 months.^{3,4}
- Twenty percent of public high school students with asthma missed school due to asthma during the 2008-2009 school year.⁴
- Children under the age of 15 accounted for 22% of asthma hospitalizations in 2008. They are more likely to be hospitalized due to asthma than West Virginians aged 15-64.⁵

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IF YOUR CHILD HAS ASTHMA...

- > **Identify and avoid the triggers that can cause your child's asthma symptoms and attacks.** Dust mites, pet dander, mold, tobacco smoke, wood smoke, and exercise are some common asthma triggers.
- > **Ask your child's doctor about developing an asthma action plan.** This tool helps to identify worsening asthma symptoms and outlines treatment as recommended by the physician. Make sure that your child's school nurse has a copy.
- > **Ask your child's school nurse about allowing your child to carry and self-administer an asthma inhaler at school,** which is supported by the West Virginia Asthma Inhaler Law (WV Code §18-5-22b).
- > **Ask your child's school nurse and teachers if they have reviewed the asthma takeACTION! curriculum,** which contains useful information about managing asthma in West Virginia schools. This CD can be obtained from the WV-AEPP.
- > **Protect your child from diesel exhaust produced by idling school busses.** This pollution is a common asthma trigger. West Virginia Dept. of Education Policy 4336 outlines circumstances under which idling should be restricted. Ask the school principal about posting WVDEP No Idling signs.



Influenza and Asthma In West Virginia



West Virginia Influenza and Asthma Facts

Approximately 177,000 (12%) West Virginia adults have at some point been diagnosed with asthma by a health care professional. In 2009 it was estimated that 126,000 (9%) West Virginia adults currently had asthma.¹

People with asthma are more likely to have serious health problems from getting the flu.²

- Approximately half of the adults with asthma in West Virginia reported receiving an influenza vaccination in the past 12 months.¹
- An average of 11% of West Virginia residents hospitalized for influenza have an additional diagnosis of asthma at time of discharge.³
- In 2008, almost 20% of children under the age of 15 that are hospitalized for influenza have an additional diagnosis of asthma at time of discharge.³

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IF YOU OR YOUR CHILD HAS ASTHMA...

- > **Anyone with asthma is at higher risk for flu-related complications. Along with everyone else, if you have asthma you should:**
 - Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after coughing or sneezing;
 - Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing and throw the tissue away. If you do not have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your elbow or shoulder not your bare hands;
 - Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth (germs are spread that way); and
 - Stay home when you are sick, except to get medical care.
- > **If you have asthma, you should follow an updated, written Asthma Action Plan, developed with your doctor. Follow this plan for daily treatment and for controlling your asthma symptoms.**
- > **If your child has asthma, make sure that his or her updated, written Asthma Action Plan is on file at school or at the Day Care Center. Be sure that plan and medication are easy to get when needed.**
- > **Everyone with asthma at least 6 months of age and older should get a shot every year to protect against seasonal flu.** Children aged 6 months through 8 years who have never had a seasonal flu shot will need two doses the first time. Children who have had a seasonal flu shot in the past only need one shot. **Persons with asthma should not use the inhaled "FluMist®" vaccine.**
- > **Certain antiviral drugs are prescription medicines that fight the flu virus by stopping it from growing in your body. They make you better faster and may prevent serious flu complications. The antiviral drug Tamiflu (also known as oseltamivir) may be prescribed for persons with asthma. Flu treatments work best if started within two days of when illness starts. This means persons with asthma should talk to their healthcare professional now and plan what to do if they develop a flu-like illness.**
- > **Do not give aspirin (acetylsalicylic acid) to children or teenagers who have the flu. This can cause a rare but serious illness called Reye's syndrome.**

