



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 12% or 42,000 West Virginians under than age of 18 have at some point been diagnosed with asthma by a health care professional.² It is estimated that in 2006, 8.4% or 31,000 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 60% of public high school students with asthma had an asthma attack in the past 12 months.^{3,4}
- More than one-third (37%) of public high school students with asthma missed school due to asthma during the 2004-2005 school year.⁴
- Children under the age of 15 accounted for 23% of asthma hospitalizations in 2006. They are more likely to be hospitalized due to asthma than West Virginians aged 15-64.⁵

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.

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.

