

# ASTHMA

## What is asthma?

Asthma is a disease of the airways of the lungs that makes breathing difficult. Asthma may occur at any age but is most common among children.



## AZ Fast Fact

Asthma is the sixth leading cause of death among children in Arizona.<sup>1</sup>

## Who has asthma in Arizona?

21% of youth and 15% of adults in Arizona have asthma. That is more than 1 in 5 youth and 1 in 7 adults who have been diagnosed with asthma.<sup>2</sup>

## What are the signs and symptoms of asthma attack?

During an asthma attack, the sides of the airways in the lungs swell and the airways shrink. Less air gets in and out of the lungs and mucus clogs the airways even more. Asthma causes wheezing, breathlessness, chest tightness, and nighttime or early morning coughing.

- Asthma was the primary cause of nearly 1 in 40 deaths among children aged 1 to 14.<sup>1</sup>
- There were more than 32,176 emergency department and hospital stays due to asthma in 2008. That is 67 emergency department visits and 20 hospitalizations due to asthma each day in Arizona.<sup>3</sup>

## What are the risk factors for asthma?

An asthma attack can occur when people are exposed

to things in the environment, such as house dust mites or tobacco smoke. These are called asthma triggers.

Some of the most important triggers include:

- Secondhand smoke
- Dust mites
- Outdoor air pollution
- Cockroach allergen
- Pets
- Mold

## What can I do about it?

Asthma is treatable and controllable through medication and by avoiding potential triggers. Not everyone with asthma takes the same medicine. Some medicines can be inhaled, or breathed in, and some can be taken as a pill. Asthma medicines come in two types—quick relief and long-term control.

- Quick-relief medicines control the symptoms of an attack while long-term control medicines help people have fewer and milder attacks.
- Long-term treatment options do not help during an asthma attack.

If your child has asthma, consult a doctor or their school nurse to complete an asthma plan to be provided to their school in case of an attack.

## What is Arizona doing?

Arizona participates in several programs that work to help control asthma, including:

- **ADHS Bureau of Tobacco and Chronic Disease: [tobaccofreearizona.org](http://tobaccofreearizona.org)**  
This Bureau is working to develop an asthma surveillance system and collaborates with the Arizona Asthma Coalition to help improve the lives of people with asthma.
- **Arizona Department of Environmental Quality, Air Quality Division: [azdeq.gov/environ/air](http://azdeq.gov/environ/air)**  
This Division works to protect and enhance public health and the environment by controlling present and future sources of air pollution, an environmental risk factor for asthma attacks.
- **Arizona Asthma Coalition: [azasthma.org](http://azasthma.org)**  
A non-profit partnership that advocates for better services and improved quality of life for Arizonans living with asthma through education, partnerships, and coalition building.

## Further information and resources

*Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*  
**[cdc.gov/asthma](http://cdc.gov/asthma)**

An online source for credible health information, including basic information about asthma, asthma triggers and how to control asthma.

*Arizona Health Matters*  
**[arizonahealthmatters.org](http://arizonahealthmatters.org)**

An interactive website that provides information about community health by county and zip code.

*American Lung Association in Arizona*  
**[lungarizona.org](http://lungarizona.org)**

Part of the nation's oldest health organization that works to prevent lung disease and promote lung health through cutting edge research, proven education programs and public health advocacy.



Bureau of Tobacco and Chronic Disease  
[www.tobaccofreearizona.com](http://www.tobaccofreearizona.com)