

Economic Burden of Asthma in the U.S.

Prevalence of Asthma in the U.S.

- Asthma is a life-threatening lung disease in which airways become inflamed, leading to breathing difficulties (e.g., wheezing, shortness of breath).¹ An estimated 17 million Americans suffer from asthma.² Of these, nearly 60 percent (or approximately 10 million) suffer specifically from asthma that has an allergic component, according to the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences.³
- Asthma prevalence has been increasing since the early 1980s in all ages and racial groups, and in both sexes.⁴ According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the number of asthma sufferers more than doubled from 6.7 million in 1980 to 17 million in 1998.

Impact of Uncontrolled Asthma: ER Visits, Hospitalization & Deaths

People with difficult to control asthma comprise the majority of asthma-associated costs, with 80% of asthma-associated costs driven by 20% of the asthma population. According to analyses from the American Lung Association and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, asthma-related mortality increased 50 percent from 1980 to the mid-'90s. On an annual basis, asthma accounts for approximately:

- 5,000 deaths⁶
- As many as 14 people in the United States suffer a fatal asthma attack everyday
- 500,000 hospitalizations⁴
- 2 million emergency department visits⁵
- 14 million missed school days and 14.5 million missed work days⁶ and 100 million days of restricted activity annually⁷
- 7.4 million asthma patients report at least one unscheduled medical visit in a one year period⁵

Economic Impact of Asthma

- According to the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, direct and indirect financial costs for all forms of asthma total \$14 billion, including \$9.4 billion in direct costs and \$4.6 billion in indirect costs (missed school and work days).⁸

- ¹ American Lung Association. Executive Summary: The American Lung Association Asthma Survey, 1998.
- ² National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases. Fact Sheet: Asthma and Allergy Statistics. *National Institute of Health*.
- ³ National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, Fact Sheet #9 "ASTHMA and its Environmental Triggers: Scientists Take A Practical New Look at a Familiar Illness." July 1997.
- ⁴ Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report: CDC Surveillance Summaries, "Surveillance for Asthma: United States, 1960-1995"; Vol. 47: 1998.
- ⁵ American Lung Association. Epidemiology and Statistics Unit, Best Practices and Program Services. Trends in Asthma Morbidity and Mortality. February 2002.
- ⁶ US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Surveillance for asthma: United States, 1980-1999. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* 2002;51(SS01):1-13.
- ⁷ National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute (NHLBI). Expert Panel Report 2: Guidelines for the Diagnosis and Management of Asthma. NIH Publication 97-5051, July 1997.
- ⁸ National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute. Morbidity and Mortality: 2002 Chart Book on Cardiovascular, Lung, and Blood Diseases.