

Asthma in South Carolina

Common, Costly, and Climbing

While children and young adults are the main population described here, older adults also suffer from asthma.

Asthma in the United States

- U.S. asthma cases more than tripled **from an estimated 6.7 million in 1980 to 29.6 million in 2012.**
- Asthma costs the United States about **\$56 billion** each year.
- An estimated **6.8 million (9.3%) U.S. children were asthmatic** in 2012, more than twice the entire population of South Carolina.
- **3,630 people died** of asthma in 2013 (1.1 per 100,000 population age-adjusted rate).

Asthma in South Carolina

- **61 South Carolinians died** from asthma in 2013 (1.2 per 100,000 population age-adjusted rate).
- In 2013, 1% (5,219) of ALL hospitalizations were for asthma. Twenty-eight percent of all those hospitalizations were among children.
- Currently about **311,539 adults** and **102,440 children** suffer from asthma in South Carolina (2013 estimate).
- Currently between 14.8% and 19.2% of high school students suffer from asthma. Between 21.9% and 27.9% of high school students have ever been told that they have asthma, compared to 21% nationwide (2013).
- Of those high school students who are asthmatic, 26% have been given an asthma action or management plan by a doctor.
- Of those high school students with asthma, 22% have missed school days within the last year due to their illness.

Asthma and Tobacco Use

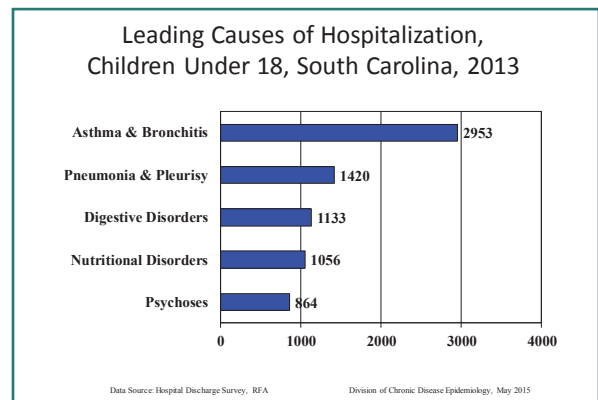
- Of those high school students who were asthmatic, **16.5% are current smokers**, which is more than the statewide percentage for high school students of 15.4% (not significantly different).
- **51%** of high school students with asthma were exposed to secondhand smoke in a room, car, school, or work within the past week.
- According to the Surgeon General, children with asthma exposed to environmental tobacco smoke experience more frequent and severe asthma attacks.

Asthma Hospitalization and ED

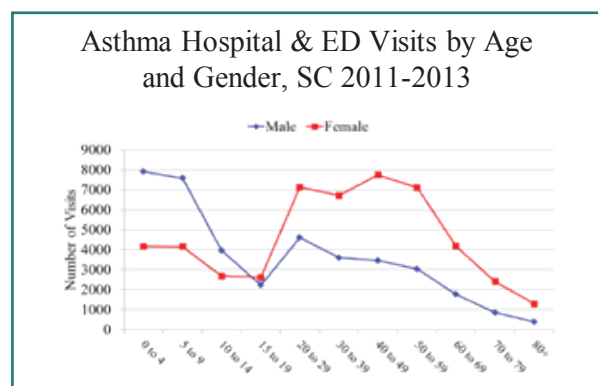
Many people with asthma receive care from their family doctor, but the best asthma data in South Carolina comes from hospitalization and Emergency Department Room (ED) records. People with asthma severe enough to need hospitalization or an ED visit may be the ones most in need of education and public health services.

Young people suffer the most from asthma in South Carolina.

- The asthma prevalence rate is **highest among those under 18 years old**, and is the **most common chronic disease** and **leading cause of disability** among children.
- **Asthma and related conditions** were the leading cause of children's hospitalizations in 2013, with more than 2,900 admissions. The second leading cause, pneumonia, is diagnosed more frequently in children with asthma.



- **More than 73,000 ED visits** were due to asthma during 2011-2013.
- **Children visited the ED more than 28,000 times (39% of the total)** for asthma during 2011-2013.



- Around the age of 15, the pattern of asthma hospital and ED visits switch between males and females.

What are Symptoms of Asthma?

- Shortness of breath
- Wheezing
- Tightness in the chest
- Coughing

Some asthmatic people don't wheeze. They may only cough, especially after exercise or during the night.

What are Some Common Triggers for an Asthma Attack?

- Cigarette smoke
- Dander (flakes) from the skin, hair or feathers of pets
- House dust mites
- Cockroaches
- Pollen from grass and trees
- Molds (indoor and outdoor)
- Upper airway infections, like colds
- Scented hair spray, cosmetics
- Scented cleaning products
- Strong odors from fresh paint or cooking
- Automobile fumes
- Air pollution, including ozone
- Exercise
- Strong emotions (crying, joy)

What Can You Expect from Proper Asthma Treatment?

- Enjoy sports and exercise
- Sleep through the night without asthma symptoms
- Prevent asthma attacks
- Avoid side effects from asthma medicines
- Tolerance to changes in weather and temperature

Can asthma attacks be prevented? YES!

Can asthma attacks be treated? YES!

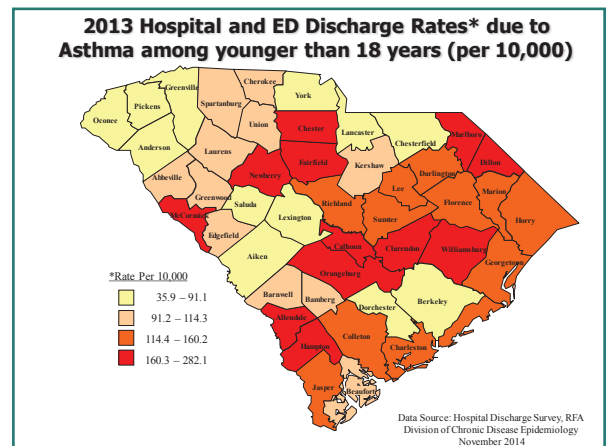


To Prevent Asthma Attacks, Work Closely with Your Health Care Provider to:

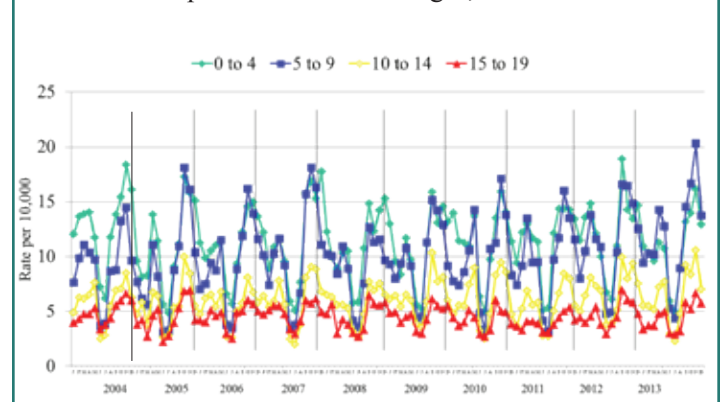
- Reduce contact with your triggers, especially at home.
- Stop smoking (cigarettes, cigars, or pipes) and keep your children away from cigarette smoke.
- Monitor your own breathing and airways with a simple device called a peak flow meter.
- Make a medical plan to treat your symptoms when you have an attack.
- Learn when to seek medical help.
- Treat symptoms early.

The Cost of Asthma

- Hospitalization costs of asthma were more than **\$110 million** and ED cost was more than **\$59 million** for South Carolina in 2013.
- The **public and private sectors** share the cost of asthma. Medicare and Medicaid covered 68.6% of asthma hospitalizations and 52.4% of asthma ED visits in 2013.
- The **costs of asthma can be greatly reduced** by improving patient education and self-management, thus reducing emergency room and hospital visits.



Childhood and Adolescents Asthma Rate (primary) by month – Hospital and ED Discharges, SC 2004-2013



Data sources: National Center for Health Statistics, National Survey of Children's Health, Asthma & Allergy Foundation of America, S.C. BRFSS, S.C. CHAS, S.C. Vital Records, S.C. Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office, S.C. YTS, and The Health Consequences of Involuntary Exposure to Tobacco Smoke: A Report of the Surgeon General 2006.