



miTracking

Michigan Environmental
Public Health Tracking

Asthma



What is Asthma?

Asthma is a serious life-long disease that is caused by swelling (inflammation) in the airways that carry oxygen in and out of the lungs. Asthma cannot be cured, but symptoms can be prevented and controlled by staying away from triggers and using medications the right way. People with asthma can live normal, active lives.

Doctor Visits

Use these tips to get the most out of your doctor visit:

- Keep your appointments or reschedule if necessary
- Ask the doctor what you need to do to control your asthma
- Ask about long-term control medications to prevent your symptoms
- Take your asthma medications just as your doctor prescribed them
- Take long-term control medication every day
- Know that long-term control medication will not give you quick-relief from asthma symptoms in an emergency situation
- Ask for the Safety Data Sheets (SDSs) for hazardous substances in your workplace to show your doctor
- Make an Asthma Action Plan with your doctor and follow it
- If you are confused about your care, ask the doctor to repeat the information in a different way or write it down for you.
- Don't agree to do something that you don't plan to do or can't do. Ask if there are other options.

Asthma Symptoms

Some common symptoms of asthma are:

- Coughing
- Shortness of breath
- Wheezing
- Tightness or heaviness in your chest

Emergency Signs

Call your doctor, go to the hospital or call an ambulance right away if:

- You are very short of breath
- Quick-relief medicines have not helped
- Peak flow is less than 50% of your best peak flow
- You notice that lips or fingernails are blue

Asthma Triggers

The things that make symptoms start are called “triggers.” It’s important to find out what your asthma triggers are and figure out ways to control or avoid them.

Some common triggers are:

- Changes in weather and/or temperature
- Chemicals fumes, gases, dust, animal protein, or other substances breathed in while at work
- Cigarette and wood smoke
- Dogs, cats, birds, small rodents
- Emotional states that can lead to hyperventilation
- Exercise
- House dust mites and cockroaches
- Mold
- Outdoor air pollution, especially on days when there are high levels of ozone and particle pollution (PM2.5)
- Pollen
- Scented products such as air fresheners, hair products, cosmetics, cleaners
- Some foods and food additives



Be Aware



- Many local TV and radio stations provide air quality forecasts to let you know when air pollutants like ozone and PM2.5 levels could be harmful to your health.
- Sign up for EnviroFlash messages so you can find out when ozone and PM2.5 are at unhealthy levels. You can get these messages by email or text message.
- Receive daily air quality information from MIAir.



1-800-648-6942

MichiganHHS



mdhhs-mitracking@michigan.gov



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www.michigan.gov/mitracking



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