

# Children and Asthma

## IN NORTH CAROLINA

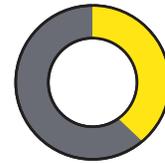
### What is Asthma?

- Asthma is a chronic (long-term) lung disease that inflames and narrows the airways.<sup>1</sup>
- Common signs and symptoms of asthma may include wheezing (a whistling sound when you breathe), chest tightness, shortness of breath, and coughing.
- For people with asthma, contact with allergens or asthma triggers (like pollen, mold, animal dander, dust mites), secondhand tobacco smoke, air pollution, occupational hazards, exercise, and airway infections may make asthma symptoms worse. When asthma symptoms get intense and/or when there are additional symptoms, an asthma attack may occur.
- Severe asthma attacks may require emergency care, and they can cause death.

### Why is asthma an important health issue for children?

- Asthma is the leading, chronic health condition reported by North Carolina public schools. Asthma accounted for 35.0% of all chronic health conditions, affecting 101,599 students in the 2010-2011 school year.<sup>2</sup>

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- Children are more likely to be hospitalized for asthma: in North Carolina in 2011, the asthma hospitalization rate was 13.6 per 10,000 population for children, compared to 9.2 per 10,000 for adults.<sup>3</sup>
- In 2011, children with asthma below the age of 5 had the highest hospitalization rate of any other age group in North Carolina (24.1 hospitalizations per 10,000 population).<sup>3</sup>



**Asthma is the leading, chronic health condition and the leading cause of absenteeism reported by North Carolina public schools (2010-2011) affecting 101,599 students.<sup>2</sup>**

**What can parents do to help children control their asthma?<sup>4-6</sup>**

- Work with your pediatrician or other healthcare provider to learn how to manage your child's asthma.  
\*Age 17 and under
- Learn which medications your child should take and when they should take each of them.
- Learn what may trigger your child's asthma and take action(s) in reducing those triggers.
- Make an asthma action plan with your healthcare provider – the action plan looks at what triggers or brings on your child's asthma and informs everyone who cares for your child about the action plan. It should include your child's daily medicine needs and rescue medicines for quick relief during an attack.
- Monitor the Air Quality Index (AQI) ([www.airnow.gov](http://www.airnow.gov)) before your child participates in any outdoor activities.

**Where can I find more information about asthma?**

- North Carolina Asthma Program:  
[www.asthma.ncdhhs.gov](http://www.asthma.ncdhhs.gov)  
or call (919) 707-5213
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: [www.cdc.gov/asthma](http://www.cdc.gov/asthma)
- National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute:  
[www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/health-topics/topics/asthma/](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/health-topics/topics/asthma/)
- American Lung Association:  
[www.lung.org/lung-disease/asthma/](http://www.lung.org/lung-disease/asthma/)
- Environmental Protection Agency:  
[www.epa.gov/iaq/iaqhouse.html](http://www.epa.gov/iaq/iaqhouse.html)

SOURCES:

- <sup>1</sup> National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute. What is Asthma? (<http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/health-topics/topics/asthma/>). Accessed June 27, 2013.
- <sup>2</sup> North Carolina Health and Human Services, School Health Unit. North Carolina Annual School Health Services Report, 2010-2011 (<http://www.ncdhhs.gov/dph/wch/doc/stats/SchoolHealthServicesAnnualReport-2010-2011.pdf>). Accessed June 27, 2013.
- <sup>3</sup> North Carolina State Center for Health Statistics, Asthma Hospitalization Data, 2011.
- <sup>4</sup> National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute. So You Have Asthma ([http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/lung/asthma/have\\_asthma.pdf](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/lung/asthma/have_asthma.pdf)). Accessed June 13, 2013.
- <sup>5</sup> American Lung Association. Taking Control of Asthma (<http://www.lung.org/lung-disease/asthma/taking-control-of-asthma/>). Accessed June 13, 2013.
- <sup>6</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Asthma: Flu Shots – Get Vaccinated (<http://www.cdc.gov/asthma/flu.html>). Accessed June 13, 2013.



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Department of Health and Human Services | Aldona Z. Wos, M.D., Secretary  
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