

ASTHMA

It is estimated that 10% of children in Georgia have asthma. Among children with asthma, hospitalization rates are highest for those under the age of four.

WHAT IS ASTHMA?

- Asthma is a chronic inflammatory disorder of the lungs and airways that causes recurrent episodes of wheezing, breathlessness, chest tightness, and coughing.
- Appropriate disease management can reduce the burden of asthma.

CHILDHOOD ASTHMA PREVALENCE

- Approximately 10% of children ≤ 17 years in Georgia, an estimated 212,000 children, have asthma.
- Asthma is more common among boys (11%) than girls (8%).
- The prevalence of asthma among non-Hispanic black children (12%) is not significantly different from the prevalence among non-Hispanic white children (9%) or children of other races/ethnicities (8%).

ADULT ASTHMA PREVALENCE

- Approximately 480,000 (7%) of adults in Georgia have asthma.
- Asthma is more common among adult women (9%) than adult men (5%).
- The prevalence of asthma among black adults (9%) is not significantly different from the prevalence among white adults (7%) or adults of other races/ethnicities (7%).
- Adults with higher education and income are less likely to be affected by asthma.

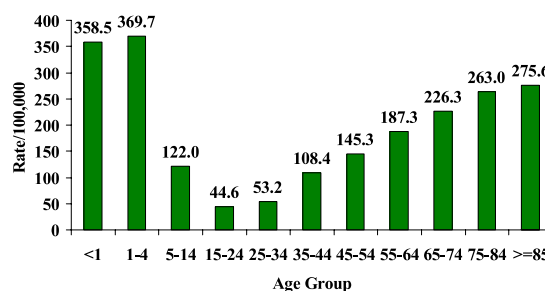
EMERGENCY ROOM (ER) VISITS

- There were more than 47,500 ER visits in 2003 with asthma as the primary diagnosis.
- The overall rate of ER visits due to asthma was 534 per 100,000 in 2003.
- Asthma ER charges were approximately \$35 million.
- Children aged 1-4 had the highest ER visit rates, 1,469 per 100,000 population.
- ER visit rates decrease as age increases.

HOSPITALIZATIONS

- There were more than 11,000 hospitalizations in 2003 with asthma as the primary diagnosis.
- Blacks are twice as likely to be hospitalized as whites.
- Asthma hospitalization charges were more than \$100 million.
- Hospitalization rates are the highest for children under the age of four.

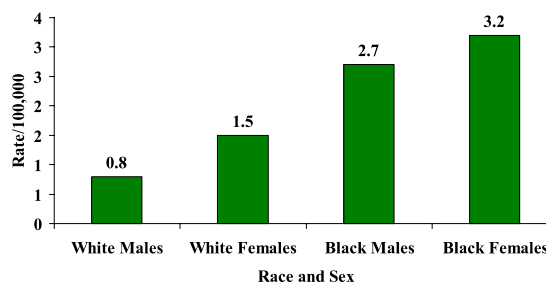
Asthma Hospitalizations by Age Group 2003



DEATHS

- On average from 1996 to 2003 there were 115 asthma deaths per year (2.2 per 100,000)
- Blacks are 2.5 times more likely to die from asthma than whites.
- Women are 1.5 times more likely to die from asthma than men.
- Death rates from asthma increase with age.

Asthma Deaths by Race and Sex 1999-2003



CHILDREN: Medicine Use

- Among children with asthma, 84% use prescription medicine, including 36% with prescriptions for control[§] and quick-relief[¶] medicine, 14% with a prescription only for control medicine, and 34% with a prescription only for quick relief medicine.
- Among children with asthma who have a prescription only for quick relief medicine, 55% (17% of all children with asthma) use ≥ 2 prescriptions per year.

CHILDREN: Asthma Management and Training

- 65% of children with asthma do not have a written asthma management plan.
- Most but not all caretakers and children with asthma have been taught asthma management.

Disease management practices and training for children with asthma, Georgia 2002-2003

Management practice/training	% (95%CI)
No routine check-ups for asthma	30 (25-35)
No written asthma management plan	65 (59-70)
Two or more quick-relief prescriptions per year but no control medicine	17 (13-21)
No training on how to manage asthma*	18 (14-23)
No training to recognize signs and symptoms of an attack*	28 (23-33)
No training about things that can trigger asthma attacks*	23 (20-25)
No training on use of peak flow meter*	13 (9-18)
No training on use of inhaler (among those with inhaler)*	6 (2-9)
No training on use of spacer (among those with spacer)*	30 (24-37)

*For either caregiver or child ≥ 5 years

ADULTS: Asthma Management

- 53% of adults with asthma reported having had an episode of asthma or an asthma attack within the past 12 months.
- 27% of adults with asthma reported they were unable to work or carry out usual activities on one or more days during the past 12 months.
- 36% of adults with asthma reported having no routine checkups for their asthma in the past 12 months.
- 43% of adults had at least one ER visit or hospital visit during the past 12 months.

[§] Control medicine: medicine designed to control airway inflammation and prevent attacks from occurring

[¶] Quick-relief medicine: medicine designed to provide quick relief of asthma symptoms during an attack or exacerbation

ASTHMA PREVENTION

Know the common triggers

Exposure to the following environmental irritants and allergens can cause an asthma attack:

- Tobacco smoke
- Dust mites
- Pets (animal dander)
- Cockroaches
- Fungi and molds (indoor and outdoor)

Take control of asthma

- Reduce exposure to your triggers.
- Work with your doctor to create an asthma management plan.
- Monitor your breathing and airways with a peak flow meter.
- Treat symptoms early.
- Learn when to seek medical help.

Create an asthma management plan

An asthma management plan is a written guide set up by your doctor to help manage asthma based on your individual needs.

Your plan will tell you:

- What brings on your asthma symptoms
- How to avoid triggers and reduce exposure
- What medicine to take and when to take it
- When you need to seek medical help.

Tips for using an asthma management plan:

- Go over each step of the plan with your doctor.
- Understand instructions for medications.
- Learn to use asthma equipment properly.
- Schedule routine visits to discuss your asthma with your doctor.
- If your plan is not working, discuss with your doctor revisions that may be needed.

Data sources: 2004 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System
2002 Georgia Childhood Asthma Survey

Date updated: December 2005

Publication number: DPH05.114H

Visit <http://www.health.state.ga.us/epi/cdiee/asthma.asp> for more information about asthma in Georgia.