

# 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 212,000 (10%) of children  $\leq 17$  years in Georgia have asthma.
- Approximately 56,000 (15%) of middle school students in Georgia have asthma.
- Approximately 70,000 (16%) of high school students in Georgia have asthma.

## 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%).
- Adults with higher education and income are less likely to be affected by asthma.

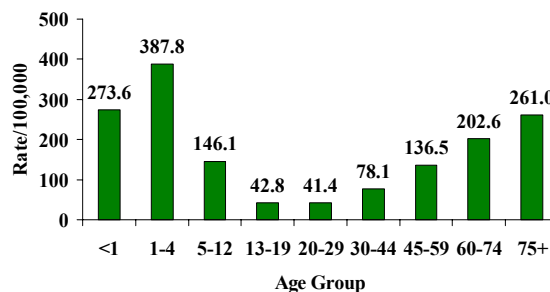
## EMERGENCY ROOM (ER) VISITS

- There were more than 47,000 ER visits in 2004 with asthma as the primary diagnosis.
- The overall rate of ER visits due to asthma was 510 per 100,000 in 2004.
- Asthma ER charges were approximately \$35 million.
- Children aged 1-4 had the highest ER visit rates, 1,445 per 100,000 populations.
- ER visit rates decrease as age increases.

## HOSPITALIZATIONS

- There were more than 11,000 hospitalizations in 2004 with asthma as the primary diagnosis.
- Blacks are twice as likely to be hospitalized as whites.
- Asthma hospitalization charges were more than \$107 million.
- Hospitalization rates are the highest for children under the age of four.

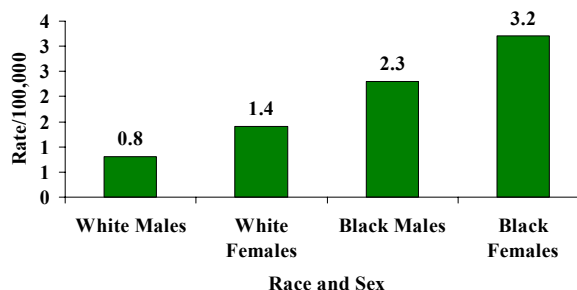
Asthma Hospitalization Rates by Age Group, Georgia 2004



## DEATHS

- On average from 2000 to 2004 there were 117 asthma deaths per year (1.6 per 100,000)
- Blacks are 2.6 times more likely to die from asthma than whites.
- Women are 1.6 times more likely to die from asthma than men.
- Death rates from asthma increase with age.

Asthma Death Rates by Race and Sex, Georgia 2000-2004



## CHILDREN: Medicine Use

- Among children with asthma, 84% use prescription medicine, including 36% with prescriptions for control<sup>§</sup> and quick-relief<sup>¶</sup> 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  $\geq 2$  prescriptions per year.

## CHILDREN: Asthma Management and Training

- 65% of children with asthma do not have a written asthma management plan.
- Most (82%) of 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	%
No routine check-ups for asthma	30
No written asthma management plan	65
Two or more quick-relief prescriptions per year but no control medicine	17
No training on how to manage asthma*	18
No training to recognize signs and symptoms of an attack*	28
No training about things that can trigger asthma attacks*	23
No training on use of peak flow meter*	13
No training on use of inhaler (among those with inhaler)*	6
No training on use of spacer (among those with spacer)*	30

\*For either caregiver or child  $\geq 5$  years

## ADULTS: Asthma Management

- 56% of adults with asthma reported having had an episode of asthma or an asthma attack within the past 12 months.
- 14% 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.
- 42% of adults with asthma reported having no routine checkups for their asthma in the past 12 months.
- 35% of adults had at least one ER visit or hospital visit during the past 12 months.

<sup>§</sup> Control medicine: medicine designed to control airway inflammation and prevent attacks from occurring

<sup>¶</sup> 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, as recommended by your doctor.
- 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 and you 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:

2005 Georgia Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System  
2005 Georgia Youth Tobacco Survey  
2002 Georgia Childhood Asthma Survey

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