Managing Your Asthma

For people with asthma, understanding asthma management and treatment options will help you take control of your asthma.

Steps to help keep your asthma under control:
1. Make your medical visits more productive.
2. Create an asthma management plan.
3. Assess and monitor your control.
4. Understand your medication.
5. Reduce asthma triggers.
6. Learn asthma self-management skills.

Asthma is a chronic disease that affects your lungs. It causes repeated episodes of wheezing, breathlessness, chest tightness, and nighttime or early morning coughing. Asthma cannot be cured, but it can be controlled and managed with adequate access to medical care, medications, trigger avoidance, and self-management.

Find more information on asthma via the following resources:
- www.cdc.gov/asthma
- www.lung.org/asthma

References and data sources:
1. CDC Asthma [https://www.cdc.gov/asthma]
3. CDC Most Recent Asthma Data [https://www.cdc.gov/asthma/most_recent_data.htm]
4. SC DHEC CHAS, 2016
5. SC DHEC BRFSS, 2019

What Causes Asthma?

No one knows exactly what causes asthma. Asthma tends to run in families and may be inherited, and environmental factors may also play a key role. Scientists continue to explore what causes asthma, but we do know that these factors play an important role in the development of asthma.

Asthma Triggers

The most common asthma triggers include:
1. Allergies
2. Genetics
3. Environment
4. Respiratory infection

Asthma Triggers

- Tobacco Smoke
- Dust Mites
- Outdoor Air Pollution
- Cockroaches
- Pets

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Uncontrolled Asthma is a Common Reason People Seek Medical Attention

In 2019, there were 19,010 emergency department (ED) visits and 2,225 hospitalizations for asthma. The rate of ED visits and hospitalizations were higher for females than males and five times higher for black residents than white residents.

In 2019, charges for asthma were more than $67 million. In 2019, hospitalization charges were more than $60 million.

In South Carolina, asthma hospital admissions follow seasonal patterns. More children are hospitalized for asthma in the spring and fall, and fewer are hospitalized in the summer. A major contributor to the fall increase in asthma hospitalizations is thought to be increasing rates of respiratory infections associated with children going back to school. Other possible contributing factors include pollen and mold.

Asthma Among Children

Children suffer the most from asthma in South Carolina.

- Asthma was the second leading cause of children’s hospitalizations in fiscal year 2019, surpassed by acute bronchiolitis.
- In 2019, among those 17 and under, there were 6,152 ED visits and 941 hospitalizations for asthma.
- ED charges were more than $16 million for asthma among children and hospitalization charges were more than $12 million in 2019.
- The counties along the I-95 corridor had the highest rates of hospitalizations and ED visits among children in 2019.

Asthma Hospitalizations and Emergency Department Visits Among Children 0-17

Source: SC RFA, 2019

Note: Primary diagnosis of asthma.

Asthma Hospitalizations and Emergency Department Visits Among Children, by Month of Admission

Source: SC RFA, 2019

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