Asthma in Washington County and Ohio

What is asthma?

Asthma is a chronic disease that affects the airways in the lungs. During an asthma attack, airways become inflamed, making it hard to breathe. Asthma attacks can be mild, moderate, or serious — and even life threatening.

Symptoms of an asthma attack include:

- Coughing
- Shortness of breath or trouble breathing
- Wheezing
- Tightness or pain in the chest

We don’t know for sure what causes asthma, but we do know that attacks are sometimes triggered by:

- Allergens (like pollen, mold, animal dander, and dust mites)
- Exercise
- Occupational hazards
- Tobacco smoke
- Air pollution
- Airway infections

There’s no cure for asthma. People with asthma can manage their disease with medical care and prevent attacks by avoiding triggers.

Is asthma really a problem?

Yes. Asthma is a serious health and economic concern in the United States and Ohio.

- In 2014, an estimated 830,000 adults\textsuperscript{1,2} and 420,000\textsuperscript{2,3} children in Ohio had asthma.
- In Ohio, 10.8 percent of adults have asthma compared to 9.6 percent in Washington County\textsuperscript{1}.
- An estimated 5,806 adults in Washington County have asthma\textsuperscript{1,2}.
- In Ohio, 14.2 percent of children have asthma, compared to 10.1 percent in Washington County\textsuperscript{1}.
- An estimated 2,244 children in Washington County have asthma\textsuperscript{2,3}.
What makes a person more likely to have asthma?

Gender:
- Women are more likely to have asthma. In Ohio, 14.3 percent of women and 7 percent of men have asthma\(^1\).
- Boys are more likely to have asthma than girls. In Ohio, 17 percent of boys and 12 percent of girls have asthma\(^2\).

Race and ethnicity:
- Black children and adults are more likely to have asthma than white children and adults.
- More than 1 in 5 black children in Ohio have been diagnosed with asthma\(^3\).

Education level:
- In Ohio, adults who didn’t finish high school are more likely to have asthma than adults who graduated high school or college\(^4\).

Income level:
- In Ohio, adults with an annual household income of $15,000 or less are more likely to have asthma than adults with incomes $35,000 and above\(^1\).

It can make you sick.
- In Ohio during 2012, more than 17,000 inpatient hospital visits were made for asthma, at a rate of 15.1 visits per 10,000 residents\(^4\).
- In Washington County, 40 visits were made for asthma in 2012 at a rate of 9.0 per 10,000 residents\(^4\).
- In Ohio during 2012, more than 65,000 emergency department visits were made for asthma, at a rate of 54.1 visits per 10,000 residents\(^4\).
- In Washington County, 203 visits were made for asthma in 2012, at a rate of 23.2 per 10,000 residents\(^3,4\).

It’s deadly.
- Twelve people in Ohio die from asthma every month.
- In 2012, 146 people in Ohio died from asthma. In Washington County, there were no deaths in 2012\(^5\).

Sources:
1. Centers for Disease Control, Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, Year 2014
2. US Census, 2014
4. Ohio Hospital Association Clinical-Financial Database, 2011-2012

For more information about asthma, contact Cynthia Weiss at:
Ohio Department of Health
Asthma Program
614.728.3620
www.odh.ohio.gov/asthma