



Asthma and Allergy
Foundation of America

fact sheet

RE: ASTHMA and ALLERGY STATISTICS

ASTHMA Overview

20 million Americans have asthma. Asthma is characterized by inflammation of the air passages resulting in the temporary narrowing of the airways that transport air from the nose and mouth to the lungs. Asthma symptoms can be caused by allergens or irritants that are inhaled into the lungs, resulting in inflamed, clogged and constricted airways.

Symptoms include difficulty breathing, wheezing, coughing tightness in the chest. In severe cases, asthma can be deadly.

- There is no cure for asthma, but asthma can be managed with proper prevention and treatment.
- Asthma has a genetic component. If only one parent has asthma, chances are 1 in 3 that each child will have asthma. If both parents have asthma, it is much more likely (7 in 10) that their children will have asthma.
- More Americans than ever before say they are suffering from asthma. It is one of this country's most common and costly diseases.

ASTHMA Fast Facts

Every day in America:

- 40,000 people miss school or work due to asthma.
- 30,000 people have an asthma attack.
- 5,000 people visit the emergency room due to asthma.
- 1,000 people are admitted to the hospital due to asthma.
- 14 people die from asthma.

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ALLERGY Overview

50 million Americans have Allergies. An “allergy” is characterized by an overreaction of the human immune system to a foreign protein substance (“allergen”) that is eaten, breathed into the lungs, injected or touched. This immune overreaction can result in symptoms such as coughing, sneezing, itchy eyes, runny nose and scratchy throat. In severe cases it can also result in rashes, hives, lower blood pressure, difficulty breathing, asthma attacks, and even death.

- There are no cures for allergies. Allergies can be managed with proper prevention and treatment.
- Allergies affect every household in the U.S. A report revealed that more than 50% of Americans involved in a recent research project tested positive to a simple skin scratch test, a common medical test for allergies.
- More Americans than ever before say they are suffering from allergies. It is among the country's most common, yet often overlooked, diseases.

ALLERGY Fast Facts

Types of allergies include:

- Indoor and Outdoor Allergies – (Allergic rhinitis; seasonal/perennial allergies; hay fever; nasal allergies) Approximately 75% of all allergy sufferers have indoor/outdoor allergies as their primary allergy.
- Skin Allergies – (Atopic dermatitis; eczema; hives; urticaria; contact allergies) Approximately 7% of allergy sufferers have skin allergies as their primary allergy.
- Food and Drug Allergies – Approximately 6% of allergy sufferers have food/drug allergies as their primary allergy. Food allergy is more common among children than adults. 90% of all food allergy reactions are caused by 8 foods: milk, soy, eggs, wheat, peanuts, tree nuts, fish and shellfish. For drug allergies, penicillin is the most common allergy trigger.
- Latex Allergy – Approximately 4% of allergy sufferers have latex allergy as their primary allergy.
- Insect Allergies – Approximately 4% of allergy sufferers have insect allergies as their primary allergy (bee/wasp stings and venomous ant bites; cockroach and dust mite allergen may also cause nasal or skin allergy symptoms.)
- Eye Allergies – (Allergic conjunctivitis; ocular allergies) – Approximately 4% of allergy sufferers have eye allergies as their primary allergy.

