



ASTHMA IN MICHIGAN

Nearly 10% of Michigan's children and adults have asthma. That's more than 232,000 kids and 724,000 adults across the state. In fact, Michigan's asthma rate is 10% higher than the national rate.¹

- **What is asthma?** Asthma is a chronic disease that affects the lungs. It is one of the most common diseases impacting children, but adults can have asthma, too. Asthma can cause wheezing, breathlessness, coughing, chest tightness, and disturbed sleep. People with asthma are very sensitive to pollutants released from coal-fired power plants and factories, including particulate matter (soot), ozone (smog), sulfur oxides, nitrogen oxides, arsenic, mercury, and lead.²
- **What triggers asthma?** While the development of asthma seems to have a genetic component, outside factors are what set off, or trigger, asthma attacks. In recent years, studies have found that air pollution from coal-fired power plants is a major trigger. The pollution generated by Michigan's coal-fired power plants is responsible for over 68,000 asthma attacks and more than 180 premature deaths each year.³
- Asthma attacks are expensive and disruptive. Sometimes an attack requires emergency treatment and hospitalization, forcing an asthma sufferer to miss school or work. There are nearly 17,000 asthma-related hospitalizations each year in Michigan.¹ The average cost of an asthma hospitalization is \$11,671.¹ Add it all up, and we spend over \$394 million per year on asthma hospitalizations.
- Climate change is a source of concern for people with asthma. Warmer weather can increase levels of ozone and allergens that cause asthma attacks. The Michigan Department of Community Health is preparing for the expected increased asthma and respiratory illness due to Michigan's changing climate.⁴ Warmer temperatures promote the production of harmful ground level ozone, a known asthma trigger.

A Healthier and Cleaner Future is Possible

Air pollution poses a health risk for millions of Michiganders, especially those with asthma. Transitioning to clean energy sources and being more energy efficient will reduce pollution and give Michigan cleaner and healthier air, improving health outcomes and saving us money on health care.

Here are two ways we can get there:

1. Tell your Michigan legislators that we can and should think of ways to increase the amount of renewable energy and energy efficiency we use in our state. After all, our energy policy can protect our health.
2. The EPA Clean Power Plan will reduce dangerous pollution that causes asthma attacks, as well as heart disease, cancer and premature death. Ask Governor Snyder to support the Clean Power Plan so that we can smooth our transition to clean, renewable energy.

¹ Asthma Initiative of Michigan, http://michigan.gov/documents/mdch/10_Ch8_Hospitalization_for_Asthma_274059_7.pdf

² Centers for Disease Control

³ Environmental Health and Engineering, Inc. "Public Health Impacts of Old Coal-Fired Power Plants in Michigan"

⁴ Michigan Climate & Health Adaptation Program (MICHAP), Michigan Department of Community Health



ABOUT MI AIR, MI HEALTH

The MI Air, MI Health Coalition works to ensure that all Michigan communities have clean, healthy air. We organize health professionals to advocate for policies that improve outdoor air quality, and improve a range of health impacts caused by unhealthy outdoor air and climate change, and reduce the healthcare costs we bear because of unhealthy outdoor air.

OUR MISSION

MI Air, MI Health is committed to ensuring healthy air for Michigan communities by assessing the health effects of air quality and advocating for the development, implementation, and enforcement of policies to address these issues, recognizing that clean air contributes to a healthy economy.

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