



Asthma & Seniors In West Virginia

West Virginia Asthma & Seniors Facts

Children are not the only people who have asthma. In the United States, 19.5 million adults have asthma, almost 3 million seniors aged 65 and older.¹

In 2009, approximately 7.9% of West Virginia seniors had asthma.¹ This equals nearly 23,000 West Virginians aged 65 and older.

Asthma is a controllable condition, yet many West Virginia seniors with asthma experience asthma-related complications that result in hospitalization and death.

- In 2008, there were 783 asthma hospitalizations among seniors, a rate of 27.5 hospitalizations per 10,000 seniors.²
- Since 2003, West Virginia seniors have been more likely than younger adults and children to be hospitalized for asthma.²
- Between 2000 and 2008, 134 West Virginia seniors died from asthma.³
- Senior women are more likely than senior men to be hospitalized for asthma and to die from asthma.^{2,3}

Addressing Asthma In West Virginia

The West Virginia Asthma Education and Prevention Program (WV-AEPP) and our network of partners from the West Virginia Asthma Coalition and the American Lung Association of West Virginia are dedicated to the goal of reducing the burden of asthma to the citizens of our state. If you would like to learn more about our asthma programs, contact WV-AEPP at (304) 558-0644 or www.wvasthma.org.

MANAGING YOUR ASTHMA

It is important to remember that your asthma can be controlled so that you can be healthy and active.

Here are some tips:

- > **Identify and avoid the triggers that can cause your asthma symptoms or attacks.** Common asthma triggers include dust mites, pet dander, mold, tobacco smoke, wood smoke, and exercise.
- > **Ask your doctor about developing an asthma action plan.** This tool helps to identify worsening asthma symptoms and outlines treatment as recommended by your physician.
- > **Tell you doctor about all of the medications you are taking.** Some asthma medications may make other health conditions worse, and some other medications may make your asthma worse.
- > **Be patient and honest with your doctor.** Sometimes it is difficult for doctors to determine whether lung and breathing problems in older people are due to asthma, other lung conditions such as bronchitis and emphysema, or heart disease. It may take time to find the best treatment for you.

