

# ASTHMA FACTS

## **Asthma is a rapidly growing public health problem. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:**

- 22 million people, including 6.5 million children, have asthma.
  - \* Asthma prevalence is higher among families with lower incomes.
- 12 million people report having an asthma attack in the past year.
- Asthma accounts for nearly 15 million outpatient clinic visits, and nearly 2 million emergency department visits each year.
- African Americans continue to have higher rates of asthma emergency department visits, hospitalizations, and deaths than do Caucasians:
  - \* The rate of emergency department visits is 350% higher.
  - \* The hospitalization rate is 240% higher.
  - \* The asthma death rate is 200% higher.
- Approximately 2 million Hispanics in the U.S. have asthma and Puerto Ricans are disproportionately impacted:
  - \* The rate of asthma among Puerto Ricans is 125% higher than non-Hispanic white people and 80% higher than non-Hispanic black people.
  - \* The prevalence of asthma attacks is highest among Puerto Ricans.

## **Asthma in Children:**

- Asthma is the most common serious chronic disease of childhood.
- Asthma is the third-ranking cause of hospitalization among children under 15.
- Asthma in children is the cause of seven million physician visits and nearly 200,000 hospitalizations.
  - \* Asthma accounts for one-third of all pediatric emergency room visits and is the fourth-most common cause of pediatric visits to the doctor's office.
  - \* An average of one out of every 13 school-aged child has asthma.
  - \* Asthma is the leading cause of school absenteeism from a chronic childhood condition.
  - \* 13 million school days are missed each year due to asthma.



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## **The Cost of Asthma:**

- Annual expenditures for health and lost productivity due to asthma are estimated at \$16 billion, according to the National Heart Lung and Blood Institute.

## **Asthma and the Environment: Research by EPA and others has shown that**

- Dust mites, molds, cockroaches, pet dander, and secondhand smoke trigger asthma attacks.
- Exposure to secondhand smoke can cause asthma in pre-school aged children.
- Exposure to dust mites can cause asthma.
- Ozone and particle pollution can cause asthma attacks.
  - \* When ozone levels are high, more people with asthma have attacks that require a doctor's attention.
  - \* Ozone makes people more sensitive to asthma triggers such as pet dander, pollen, dust mites, and mold.