



Chicago Asthma Epidemic

- In Cook County, 317,906 adults and 121,610 children have been diagnosed with asthma.¹
- Age-adjusted asthma mortality in Chicago was nearly five times higher in non-Hispanic blacks than in non-Hispanic whites.²
- The asthma hospitalization rate in Chicago is nearly double the national average.^{3,4}
- More than half (58%) of all children with asthma in Chicago had a severe asthma attack in the past year, and nearly one-third (31%) had an asthma attack so bad they thought their life was in danger.⁵
- Death rates from asthma are particularly high for African Americans and Hispanics (four to six times higher than for Caucasians), and are concentrated in urban areas, including Chicago.⁶
- In a Chicago survey, 28% of people with asthma reported being awakened by breathing problems at least once a week.⁵
- In a Chicago survey, people with asthma reported limitations to their activity level as follows⁵:
 - 40% limited in sports/recreation
 - 28% limited in normal physical exertion
 - 21% limited in their social activities
- In some areas of Chicago, as many as 59% of children (age 0-12) diagnosed with asthma live with a smoker despite secondhand smoke being a major asthma trigger.⁷
- In Chicago, Puerto Rican children have the highest asthma prevalence rate (34%), compared to the national average of 10%.⁷
- As many as 23% of children in Chicago with asthma avoided activities due to their asthma, while only 4% of children without asthma avoided activities for any health reasons.⁵

¹ Adult and Pediatric Asthma numbers are taken from a variety of sources; The Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), United States Census 2000 and National Health Interview Survey, 2001 (NHIS)

² Thomas, S.D., Whitman, S. (1999). "Asthma Hospitalizations and Mortality in Chicago, An Epidemiologic Overview" *CHEST*, 116, 4.

³ National Health Interview Survey. 1998. (Provided by Dr. Sandra Thomas, Chicago Department of Public Health.)

⁴ Mannino et. al. (2002). "Surveillance for Asthma – United States, 1980-1999." Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. CDC.

⁵ Regional Survey Data, Children & Asthma in America. (2004). GlaxoSmithKline.

⁶ Sheffer, Albert, M.D. "Fatal Asthma". Partners Asthma Center. From www.asthma.partners.org.

⁷ Sinai Health System, Sinai Urban Health Institute. (2004) *Improving Community Health Survey Report*