Five Things to Know about Asthma and the Flu

- The Flu is more serious for people with asthma, even when asthma is mild or the symptoms are well managed
- People with asthma are more likely to have breathing problems if they get the flu
- Flu can trigger asthma attacks
- People with asthma are more likely to develop pneumonia after getting sick with the flu
- Asthma is the most common medical condition among children hospitalized with the flu

Source: Adapted from Influenza flyer created by the MDH Immunization Program

Be Well and Avoid the Flu this Season

It’s important for those with asthma to take the following steps to offer the best possible protection during the flu season:

- Wash your hands with soap and water. Hand washing is the single most important means of preventing the spread of disease
- People with asthma should receive the flu shot rather than the nasal spray (Flumist)
- Check your asthma action plan daily and more often if you become sick
- Take your medications
- Call or see your health care provider for care if your influenza symptoms worsen

People with asthma are at a higher risk than the general population of developing complications such as pneumonia and bronchitis from the influenza virus. Being home and sick means lost work and school days and the possibility of being hospitalized. The single best way to avoid the flu is to get vaccinated each year.

To find a flu vaccine clinic in your area, go to
HealthMap Vaccine Finder

Information for school health personnel, go to
School Health Personnel Influenza Information

Immunization information for health care providers, go to
Immunization Information for health Care Providers
Immunization Campaigns

In the spring and fall of 2013, the MDH Immunization Program ran an awareness campaign on billboards and buses in several cities across Minnesota. The messages convey the importance of getting vaccinated to protect yourself and the people you love. Free posters have been developed based on the campaign and are available to order.

To learn more and order posters, go to the Minnesota Department of Health’s Immunization Campaigns webpage.

Pertussis in Minnesota Update

Pertussis, or whooping cough, is a disease caused by bacteria that affects the lungs. Pertussis is spread through the air in droplets produced during coughing or sneezing. The best way to prevent pertussis is for all children to start receiving DTaP at 2, 4, 6 months (primary series) and boosters at 15-18 months and 4-6 years. Adolescents should receive Tdap at age 11-12 years, and adults should receive Tdap if not received before, regardless of interval since last Td. Tdap boosters are recommended during each and every pregnancy.

- As of December 5, the total number of confirmed, probable, and suspected cases reported in Minnesota for 2013: 955

2012 Pertussis Data:

- Total number of confirmed and probable cases: 4,144
- Total number of suspect cases: 495
- Total number of cases reported for 2012 are: 4,639

For additional information on Pertussis, go to the Minnesota Department of Health DtaP/DTP/Tdap Vaccine and Pertussis Disease Statistics and Maps webpages.

Wash those Hands!

The hand washing poster and more tips on hand hygiene are available from the Minnesota Department of Health webpage Clean Your Hands!

Asthma Communication Survey Coming in 2014

Since 2003, the MDH Asthma Program has produced a quarterly respiratory disease newsletter that provides information and resources related to respiratory diseases, with an emphasis on asthma-related initiatives by MDH and other asthma partners. Given changes in communications technology, the Asthma Program is interested in knowing more about the best ways to provide content that is relevant, timely, and easy to access for YOU.

To that end, the Asthma Program will be sending an electronic survey to you in early 2014. Please, take a few minutes to complete the survey. We value your insights as we develop these “new” communication approaches that will offer readers the best opportunities to stay informed on addressing asthma and other respiratory disease in Minnesota.
Adults with Asthma More Likely to Report Having Received a Flu Shot

In 2012, more than half of all Minnesota adults with asthma reported getting a flu shot compared with 42% of adults who did not have asthma. This is good news since people with asthma are more likely to experience complications if they contract influenza. The 2012 numbers are similar to those from 2011 when 55% of adults with asthma and 43% without asthma reported getting a flu shot in the past year. Unfortunately, data from 2011-2012 cannot be directly compared to data from previous years due to a substantial change in survey methods that occurred in 2011.

**Flu shot in past year by asthma status,**
**Minnesota adults (age 18 and older)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Current Asthma</th>
<th>No Asthma</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>47.0</td>
<td>32.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>43.9</td>
<td>33.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>43.8</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>45.5</td>
<td>37.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>49.9</td>
<td>38.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>46.9</td>
<td>31.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>49.5</td>
<td>37.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>55.6</td>
<td>44.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>54.7</td>
<td>46.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>59.8</td>
<td>49.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>57.5</td>
<td>48.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Minnesota Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System
The dashed line indicates a change in survey methodology.

Updated Maps and Charts Available for Asthma and COPD

MDH has updated interactive maps and charts for asthma hospitalizations and emergency department visits at [Minnesota Public Health Data Access Portal (asthma)](http://www.health.state.mn.us/data/asthma.html). Data are available through 2011. In addition, updated data are available for chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), the 5th leading cause of death in Minnesota.

State and local agencies, health care organizations, and others may use these data to evaluate trends, geographic patterns, and health disparities in Minnesota to inform program planning, outreach, and evaluation. These data were developed by the [MN Environmental Public Health Tracking Program](http://www.trace.mn.gov) and CDC, in partnership with the MDH Asthma Program. View additional data topics and subscribe for updates at the [Minnesota Public Health Data Access](http://www.health.state.mn.us/data) portal.
Asthma Information

“Asth.ma” is a blog by Ann Wu, MD, MPH. Dr. Wu is an asthma researcher at Harvard Medical School and Harvard Health Care Institute, a pediatrician at Children’s Hospital Boston, and a mom to an 8 year old with asthma. Her most recent blog discusses asthma triggers to be aware of this holiday season. Dr. Wu’s blog can be found at Asth.ma.

New Asthma Video - Living with Asthma: Families Speak

The Wisconsin Department of Health Services, American Lung Association in Wisconsin and Wisconsin Asthma Coalition has developed an informational asthma video geared toward parents of children with asthma. The video features four families sharing their story about asthma.

The video describes asthma, discusses its symptoms and triggers; explains the value of asthma action plans and asthma medicines; and highlights the importance of good communication between families, doctors, school nurses, coaches, relatives and others who take care of a child with asthma.

To view the video go to the Wisconsin Department of Health Asthma website
Free copies of the video can be ordered from the American Lung Association website Living With Asthma: Families Speak

If you have any questions about ordering the video, please contact the American Lung Association in Wisconsin at 262-703-4200.

EPA’s Burn Wise Health and Safety Awareness Kit

Burn Season has started for many areas across the country. The Environmental Protection Agency’s Burn Wise program has developed health and safety outreach materials to help reduce residential wood smoke pollution. To promote best burn tips, they’ve developed web-ready infographics, social media messages, fast facts, an article template and other tools. These can be downloaded from the Burn Wise Health and Safety Awareness Kit.

If you have questions or have trouble downloading, please contact Leigh Herrington, Herrington.leigh@epa.gov or 919-541-0882. To learn more about the health effects of wood smoke visit EPA’s Health Effects webpage.

New Study: Impact of Environmental Tobacco Smoke on Children With Asthma, United States, 2003-2010, Authors: Lara J. Akinbami, MD et al.

A new study has been published that demonstrates that while smoking rates have gone down, exposure remains common. These exposures to Environmental Tobacco Smoke (ETS) are associated with adverse outcomes in young children with asthma.

This study demonstrated that despite efforts to reduce ETS, young children often are exposed which results in adverse outcomes among children who have asthma.

These adverse outcomes include increased need for health care visits, missing school, activity limitations and sleep disruption, especially in younger children (ages 6-11 years) who have asthma.

This latest study Impact of environmental tobacco smoke on children with asthma, United States, 2003-2010, was published in the Nov-Dec. issue of Academic Pediatrics.
Janet Keysser to Retire

After managing the MDH Asthma Program for more than 11 years, Janet Keysser will be retiring on February 3, 2014. Janet was involved in developing the 2002 and 2007 strategic plans for addressing asthma in Minnesota. The financial support for the program has come from six grant applications that she has submitted – three to CDC, two to EPA, and one to HUD. Interventions developed by her staff during her tenure have include “Managing Asthma in Minnesota Schools” – a manual and trainings for more than 900 MN school health personnel; the interactive Asthma Action Plan (iAAP); the online Coach’s Asthma Clipboard Program; the online RETA-Home training addressing environmental triggers of asthma; and the quarterly respiratory disease newsletter. Asthma Program staff thank Janet for her more than 20 years of service to MDH and for providing leadership in addressing asthma in Minnesota. Best Wishes, Janet, in your retirement!

MDH Receives Governor’s Award for Increasing Access to Public Health Information

Dr. Wendy Brunner, (2nd from right in front row), the MDH asthma program epidemiologist, was part of the MN Public Health Data team that received a Governor’s Continuous Improvement Award for increasing access to public information through the MN Public Health Access data portal. The portal provides access to a variety of health and environment information in one place, with graphs and charts, interactive maps, and custom data queries. By relying on best practices in usability, plain language, and Web design, the portal provides public health information that is user-friendly and widely accessible, and that uses cost-effective strategies to communicate health information that is actionable.

Wendy has played a key role in preparing asthma data for the portal. Portal development was possible because of a 5-year Environmental Public Health Tracking grant from the CDC. Next year, asthma data will be the first data presented on the portal at the zip code level. For more information, please go to the MDH Minnesota Public Health Data Access webpage.

50th Anniversary of Surgeon General’s Report on Smoking and Health

Fifty years after the release of the first Surgeon General's report on smoking and health, remarkable progress has been made. Since 1964, smoking prevalence among U.S. adults has been reduced by half. Unfortunately, tobacco use remains the leading preventable cause of disease, disability, and death in the United States. In January 2014, the Surgeon General will release the 50th anniversary Surgeon General’s Report (SGR) on smoking and health. The report will highlight 50 years of progress in tobacco control and prevention, present new data on the health consequences of tobacco use, and detail initiatives that can end the tobacco use epidemic in the U.S.

For resources and/or sign up to receive e-mail updates on the 50th Anniversary of the Surgeon General's report on tobacco, please visit their webpage Commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the Surgeon General’s Report on Smoking and Health.
ClearWay Minnesota provides Fact Sheet on e-cigarettes

E-cigarettes (battery-operated devices used to inhale nicotine and other chemicals) have been receiving news coverage in Minnesota. Several Minnesota cities have restricted their sale and use, and state lawmakers have proposed adding them to the Freedom to Breathe Act. Link to ClearWay Minnesota’s fact sheet on e-cigarettes.

2014 Winter Calendar of Events

February 22
Fight for Air Climb 2014
7:00 – 9:00 am
US Bank Plaza, 200 South 6th Street, Minneapolis, MN 55402

Join the Fight for Air Stair Climb and climb 682 steps! Lung cancer is a leading killer. Join the American Lung Association of Minnesota in fund raising to fight it!
Register, pledge, and learn more on their Fight For Air Climb webpage. For more information, please contact Annie Henriksen at 651-223-9562 or Annie.Henriksen@Lung.org

March 6
Implementation and Interpretation of Spirometry in the Primary Care Practice
8:00 - 4:00 pm – (morning session and afternoon session)
American Lung Association of Minnesota, 490 Concordia Avenue, St. Paul

Morning session will address implementation of spirometry for health care professionals who have the responsibility to administer and implement the test. The afternoon session will focus on interpretation of spirometry and primary care providers who will be interpreting the results to assist with diagnosis and disease management.

Questions contact Janelle Thier, Manager of Respiratory Health at Janelle.Thier@Lung.org
Register on their website.

March 27
Airway Clearance Seminar
8:00 am to 12:30 pm
Saint Paul College, 235 Marshall Ave, Saint Paul, MN 55102

This half-day seminar (earn 4 Free CEUs) hosted by Saint Paul College will provide a comprehensive review of contributing factors that may lead to retained secretions, Airway Physiology at it relates to Airway Clearance, Airway Clearance techniques/devices utilized in the US, and Strategies for choosing modalities for each individual patient. This seminar is sponsored by Hill-Rom. To register please e-mail: ac.eduregistration@hill-rom.com or call 1-800-426-4224. Register early, as space is limited. Registration is required by March 20.

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To submit story ideas, provide feedback, or questions contact Kelly Raatz, Asthma Program Coordinator, at 651-201-5899 or Kelly.raatz@state.mn.us

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