



# ASTHMA

*it can take your breath away*

DATA SHEET  
FOR  
MAINE

Uncontrolled asthma is a leading reason for sick days from work in Maine.

Asthma is the most common cause of school absenteeism due to chronic disease. <sup>1</sup>

Maine has one of the highest rates of asthma in the U.S.

**asthma is a chronic problem for 1 out of every 10 Mainers**

More than  
**900**  
people in Maine required  
hospitalization  
in 2007 for asthma incurring charges of over  
**\$9 million**

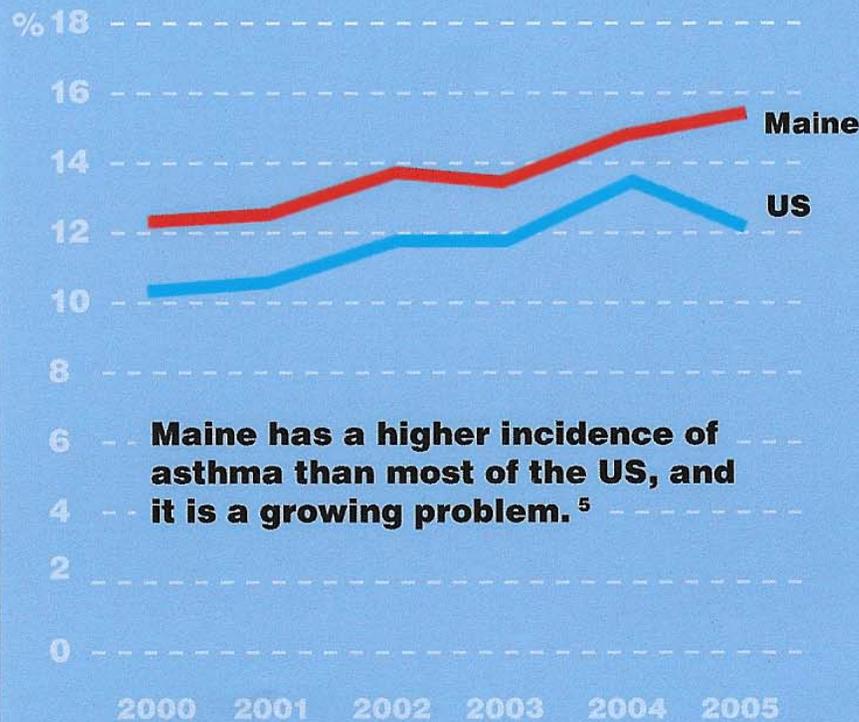
...most of these costs could have been avoided. <sup>2</sup>

Can asthma be controlled?

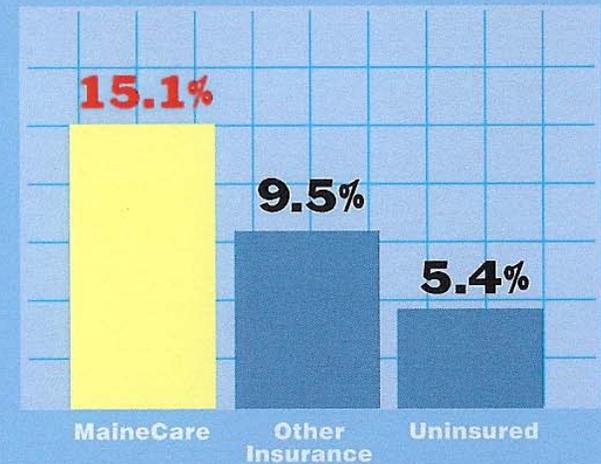
# Critical Facts About Asthma

- Asthma is a chronic lung disease that causes breathlessness, wheezing, coughing and chest tightness. It is likely caused by a combination of genetics and environmental exposures.
- Asthma is most prevalent in children, MaineCare recipients and adults who can't work.

Asthma in Maine:  
Nearly \$84 million in health  
care costs every year<sup>3</sup>



**MaineCare covers a higher percentage of children with asthma than other health care plans.<sup>4</sup>**



- Uncontrolled asthma reduces a person's quality of life. Persons with uncontrolled asthma in Maine experience in total over 500,000 days a year when they must limit their normal activities due to asthma.

#### NOTES:

1. CDC, National Center for Health Statistics. *Asthma Prevalence, Health Care Use and Mortality: United States, 2003-05*. January 2007.
2. Maine Health Data Organization survey, calendar year 2007
3. Derived from 2007 national estimates based on childhood and adult asthma prevalences by National Heart Lung and Blood Institute (NHLBI)
4. 2005 Maine Child Health Survey (MCHS)
5. Maine Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS)

# How Asthma Can Be Controlled

## Health Care

- Access to quality affordable health care, including medications
- Health care providers who follow the National Heart Lung and Blood Institute's guidelines
- Patient education to assure training in self-care is part of the treatment plan
- More nurses in Maine schools to help students control asthma

Better control of asthma reduces health care costs.

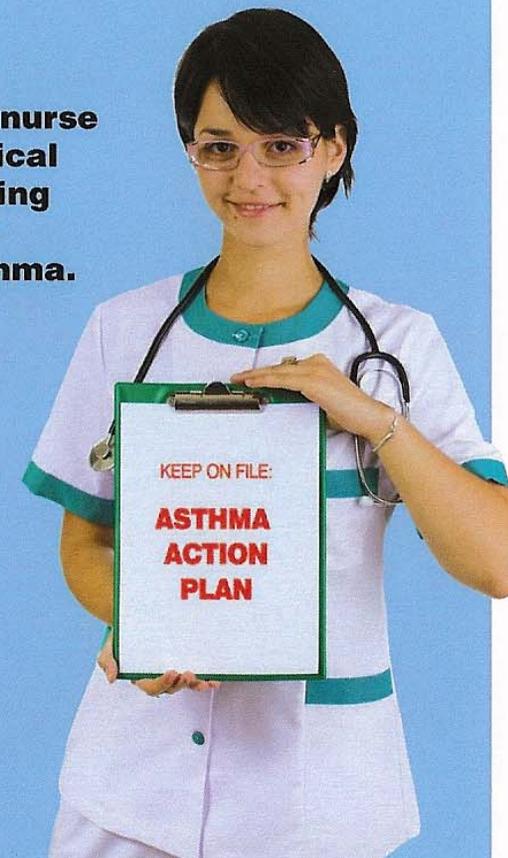
## Self Care Practices

- Obtaining and applying the knowledge needed to manage asthma
- Having a personal asthma action plan
- Understanding and avoiding asthma triggers
- Taking medications properly
- Informing health care providers, doctors and especially the school nurse that they are caring for a person with asthma

## A Healthy Environment

- Assuring that indoor air at home, work and school is free of pollutants from secondhand smoke, candles, mold, unvented heating devices and other potential asthma triggers is essential
- Signing-up for and following Department of Environmental Protection air quality alerts that provide information on ozone and particulate matter air pollution
- Becoming active in the fight for healthy indoor and outdoor air to eliminate those pollutants we can't control alone

**The school nurse plays a critical role in helping students to control asthma.**



# Asthma Action Checklist

- Support health care coverage for all including prescription drug benefits.
- Continue to support public laws that protect everyone from exposure to secondhand smoke.
- Continue Fund for a Healthy Maine support of tobacco treatment services including nicotine replacement therapy for smokers trying to quit.
- Assure that our school buildings are properly maintained to provide healthy air for all staff and students.
- Assure enforcement of state and federal air quality laws.
- Support clean, healthy and renewable energy and transportation to reduce toxic air emissions.

The American Lung Association thanks the Maine Asthma Program of the Maine Center for Disease Control for their financial support and help collecting data for this brochure.



**WIND POWER** This brochure is printed on paper manufactured using wind-generated electricity. Wind energy produces no air pollution that could trigger asthma attacks.



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## Resources for Additional Asthma Information

### American Lung Association

[www.lungne.org](http://www.lungne.org)

### Maine Asthma Prevention and Control Program

[www.maine.gov/dhhs/bohdcfh/mat](http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/bohdcfh/mat)

### Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

[www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

### National Heart Lung and Blood Institute

[www.nhlbi.nih.gov](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov)

### National Asthma Education and Prevention Program

[www.nhlbi.nih.gov/about/naepp/naep\\_pd.htm](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/about/naepp/naep_pd.htm)

### Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America

[www.aafa.org](http://www.aafa.org)

### New England Asthma Regional Council

[www.asthmaregionalcouncil.org](http://www.asthmaregionalcouncil.org)

### Healthy Maine Partnerships

[www.healthymainepartnerships.org](http://www.healthymainepartnerships.org)

### Maine Indoor Air Quality Council

[www.miaqc.org](http://www.miaqc.org)

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