

eAsthma Tracker

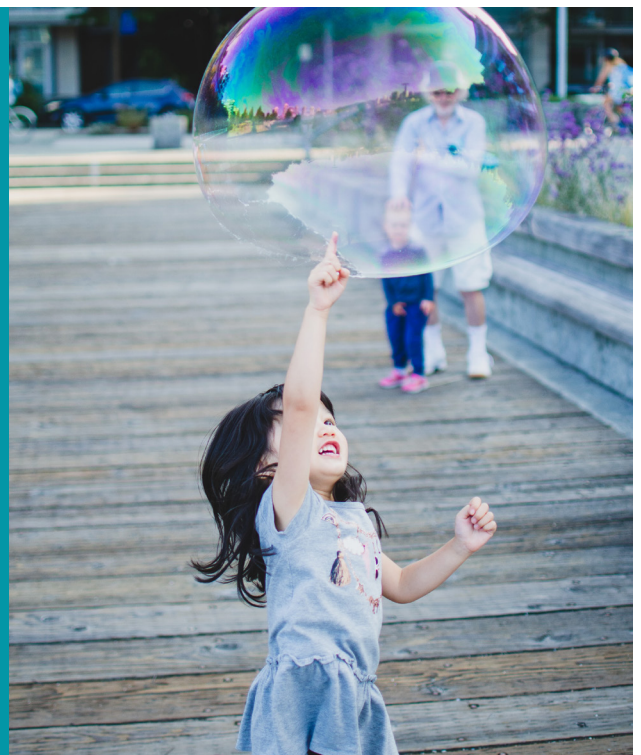
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NEWSLETTER

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Issue 2

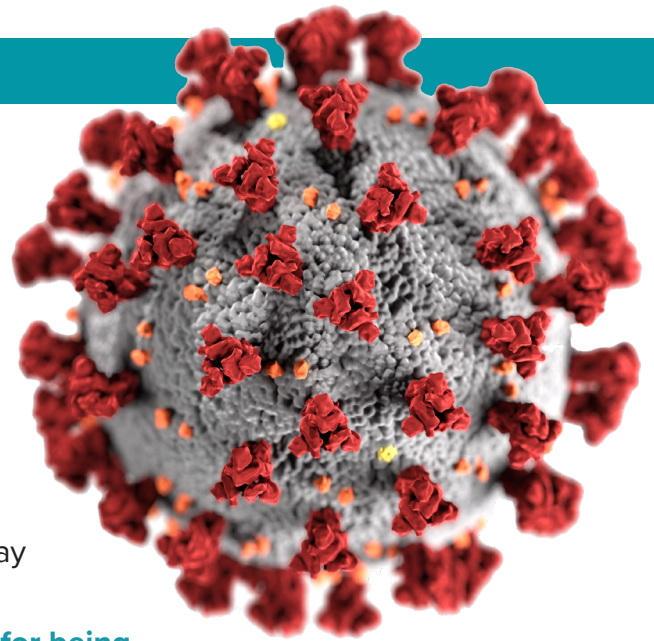
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COVID-19 and Asthma

by Joseph Johnson, MD



It's difficult to imagine anyone that isn't aware of COVID-19. We are in the midst of a pandemic that is now in its second year. Thankfully, with the introduction of vaccines and social distancing, we saw the numbers drop significantly, with recent data showing a slight increase due to the Delta variant. There has been a lot of concern about people with asthma, their risk for contracting COVID-19, and how they may be affected by it. Here is a little of what is known about it.

The CDC lists moderate-to-severe asthma as a risk factor for being hospitalized with COVID.

Moderate-to-severe asthma means that your asthma is being treated by controller medicines, which are those medications that are taken every day. In the beginning of the COVID pandemic, there was a great concern that people with asthma would be more likely to get COVID and end up with severe disease. Fortunately, so far this has not been found to be the case.

At this time, the data suggests that most people with asthma are not at increased risk of getting COVID or having severe disease compared to the general population. Some studies suggest that people who have asthma caused by something other than allergies (exercise, stress, air pollution, weather conditions) may have an increased risk of severe COVID-19 -- but the data is not consistent.

This information should provide some reassurance to those with asthma. However, it does not mean that you should not continue to be diligent in controlling your asthma. Controller medications are **very important** to take every day. If your asthma symptoms are not under control and you are exposed to any virus—COVID, flu, cold viruses, and others—you are at much higher risk of having an attack. Continue to take all medications prescribed by your doctor and follow your Asthma Action Plan.

Now, a word about asthma and vaccines.

It is strongly recommended for people with asthma to receive both COVID and annual flu vaccines. Being protected against these viruses, particularly flu, decreases your risk of developing asthma attacks.

There is much misinformation out there regarding side-effects from the COVID vaccine. Current data support side-effects such as swelling, redness and pain at the injection site. Fever/chills, fatigue, muscle aches, and headaches are also quite common. These are generally short-lived, 1-2 days, and are treated well by medicines such as Tylenol and Ibuprofen.

To date, over 150 million people in the United States have received the COVID vaccine. I encourage everyone to get it so we can be protected and end this pandemic.

Asthma and The Outdoors

by Aubrey Shunk

As we go into the warmer part of the year, some of us like to spend our time outdoors. Living as close to the mountains as we do, we have a greater opportunity to be outside and enjoy the outdoors. You may enjoy hunting, biking, fishing, camping, hiking, climbing, or many other of the outdoor activities to do in this great state.

As an asthmatic there are many hidden triggers to be aware of when outside that you may not know will trigger your asthma and allergies. Some

“You always need to be prepared.”

of these include trees, bushes, shrubs, plants,

flowers, and even fires just to name a few.

Because of these possible unexpected surprises, there are some things you should remember before you go to be sure you are prepared for all possible outcomes when it comes to your asthma and venturing outdoors.

- 1) **Be aware of your daily medications.** Have you taken your asthma or allergy medication regularly beforehand? This can make a huge difference in how your body may react to any new environment you are going into. You should also meet with your doctor beforehand to make sure your medication dose is working properly.

- 2) **Remember to bring your emergency items** such as your rescue inhaler (e.g. Like Albuterol, Ventolin, Proventil, ProAir, Xopenex, etc.) and/or EpiPen. These medications help when you have a sudden asthma attack, or your asthma or allergic reactions affect your airways.
- 3) **Know where the nearest emergency care spot is**, just in case your reaction can't be helped by the emergency medication. If you do have a bad reaction to the environment around you, you need to let the people you are going with know that you have asthma, and tell them the normal triggers you have had. This can help the people around you be in a calmer state if something does happen and ensure they can help you to the best of their abilities. Remember, tell them at the beginning of your outing – don't wait until you are feeling bad!



- 4) **Be aware of the air quality in that area.** This is one area where the eAsthma Tracker really helps out. If you have the **Air Pollution** feature enabled, you can check different things like the air quality, pollen count, and your asthma control. These are all important things to be aware of when you are going into a different environment than normal. With the eAsthma Tracker you can see the highs and lows of the air quality, and what it will most likely be like at the time you are planning to travel to that location.
- 5) **Be aware of the small things** that you wouldn't have thought about such as fires. This can mean the campfire that you sit by with your friends and family, or the natural forest fires that can come from our own or other states close by. This affects the air quality around you and could cause an asthma attack.

Remember, you can be symptom free with your asthma, and then have it flare up out of nowhere. So, you always need to be prepared even when you don't think that it will happen.

Being aware of these things can make your time away from home more enjoyable. It will put less stress on you and keep you from guessing on how your asthma will act. You will have less chance of having a severe asthma attack, or help you be prepared if one does come at an untimely moment. And, you can track all the symptoms that you had while you were there in the eAsthma Tracker – so you'll be even more prepared for the next time you want to go adventure in the great outdoors.



Understanding Your AST Score

by Heidi Shunk

Understanding your Asthma Symptom Tracker (AST) Score is similar to the colors of a traffic light. We use Green, Yellow, and Red Zones to help us see when we are doing well, when we may need to be more cautious and use our nebulizer or medications more frequently, and when we may need to take more urgent action or contact our doctor.

Green Zone = GO

When you are in the green zone, everything is going well. You find it easy to breathe, and you should continue taking your controller medicines (daily medicines prescribed by your doctor for your asthma).

Yellow Zone = Slow Down

When in the yellow zone you may experience occasional difficulty breathing. You may need to use your rescue inhaler. When in the Yellow Zone, try to think about the things that you have been around or new things you may have been exposed to and make a note of them (e.g., visiting Grandma's house with a dog, being exposed to paint or even someone's perfume). If you continue having difficulties breathing, contact your doctor.

Red Zone = Stop

In the Red Zone, your asthma is poorly controlled.

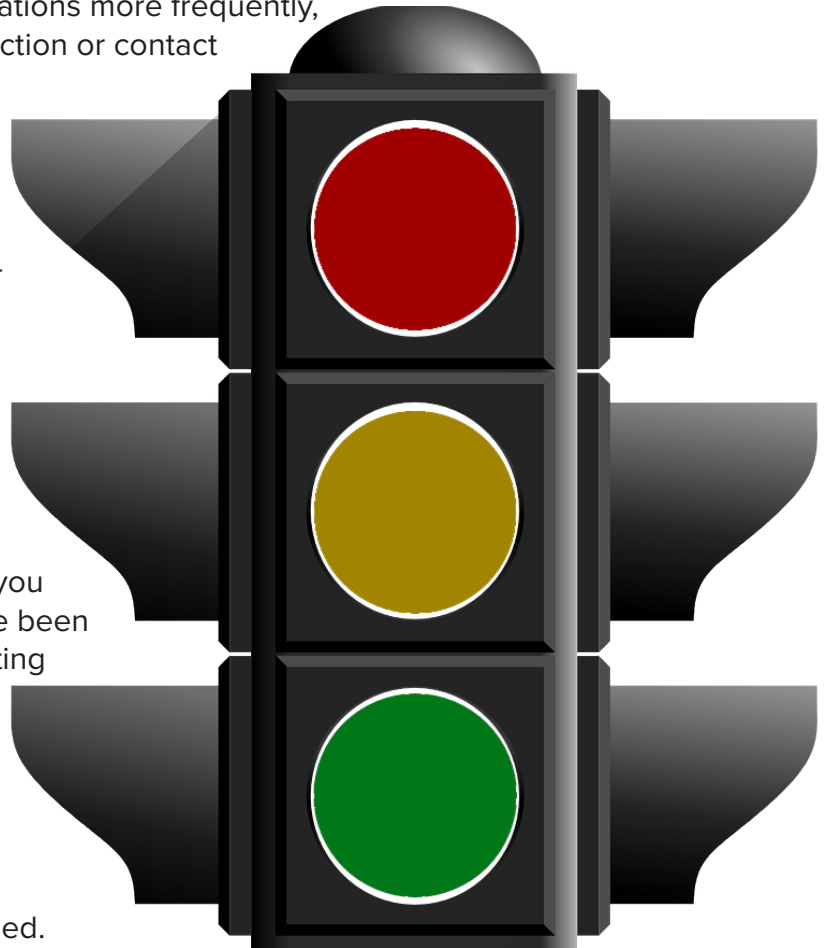
You may have difficulties breathing when in the Red Zone.

You are likely to need your rescue inhaler often and you are at high risk of having an asthma attack and could possibly have to go to the Emergency Room or the hospital. You should contact your doctor to see what is affecting your asthma and discuss treatment possibilities.

No matter which zone you are in, you should continue using the eAsthma Tracker to ensure your asthma is well controlled and that you and your doctor are on the same page. Be sure to share your eAsthma Tracker graph with your doctor. Together you can identify patterns in your asthma and work together to get and keep it in control.

Remember, everyone presents differently when struggling from asthma and your asthma symptoms may not look like someone else's asthma symptoms. For example, when you are having difficulty breathing, your chest may make a "wheezing" sound, or you might feel like an elephant is sitting on your chest. Someone else may cough a lot, or may just feel extra fatigued.

Whatever your asthma looks like, the eAsthma tracker will help you track your symptoms and learn how your asthma affects you so that you can learn to control it. The three zones in the AST are different from the three zones of your Asthma Action Plan. If you're experiencing an acute asthma exacerbation, follow the zones in your Asthma Action Plan.



Join The eAsthma Tracker Community



Facebook Group

Join the discussion! Members of our eAsthma Tracker Facebook community are encouraged to share their experiences with the tracker and asthma in general. To join, scan the QR code or visit [facebook.com/eastmatracker](https://www.facebook.com/eastmatracker).

eAsthma Tracker Newsletters

Visit our newsletter archive by scanning the QR code (or visit <http://bit.ly/eatnewsletters>) to browse the collection of all our newsletters compiled by eAsthma Tracker parents.



Have questions about the eAsthma Tracker?

Want to talk to an experienced parent?

The eAsthma Tracker team works closely with a group of parent partners to ensure the tool is effective and accessible to all patients and families. Our parent partners are excited to connect with eAsthma Tracker parents like yourself! Contact your eAsthma Tracker parent partner using the below contact information. They can help answer any questions you may have, address concerns, and provide helpful tips for using the eAsthma Tracker.

EMAIL: AsthmaTrackerParent@gmail.com
(Please schedule a time to call via email)

If you are having technical difficulties using the eAsthma Tracker, contact asthmatracker@hsc.utah.edu for support.

Asthma Trivia

by Kai Malmgren

Question 1:

What percentage of Americans have asthma?

- A. 50.2%
- B. 23.6%
- C. 8.3%
- D. 4.5%

Answer: C. 8.3% of Americans have asthma. This equates to 26.5 million people.

Question 2:

True or False: asthma can be hereditary.

Answer: True. Asthma can be hereditary.

Question 3:

True or False: weather can make your asthma worse.

Answer: True. Asthma can be affected by dry, wet or windy weather.

Question 4:

True or False: asthma is the most common chronic disease among children.

Answer: True. Asthma is the most common chronic disease among children; asthma is also more prevalent in children than in adults.

Question 5:

True or False: asthma symptoms never occur more than once a week.

Answer: False. Asthma symptoms can happen anytime/multiple times per week, so it is important to always carry your inhaler.

Question 6:

Which of the following can be an asthma trigger?

- A. Cold air
- B. Anger
- C. Fear
- D. All of the above

Answer: D. All of the above. Asthma can be triggered by many things, so it is important to know what triggers your asthma, so you can work to prevent attacks.

Question 7:

Why is it hard to breathe during an asthma attack?

- A. Your airways become larger and more open
- B. Your airways become inflamed and narrowed
- C. You can easily breathe during an asthma attack
- D. None of the above

Answer: B. During an asthma attack, your airways become inflamed and narrowed, limiting air flow and making it hard to breathe.

Question 8:

True or False: you cannot develop asthma from your job.

Answer: False. You can develop asthma by working around a lot of chemicals or dust. You can also develop asthma by smoking.

Question 9:

True or False: an asthma attack can result in death.

Answer: True. An untreated asthma attack can result in death; therefore, it is important to create an asthma action plan with your doctor.

Question 10:

True or False: allergies cannot trigger asthma.

Answer: False. Allergies can trigger asthma; therefore, it is important to know about any allergies you may have.

*Check out the [Education Resources page](#) in the eAsthma Tracker for further resources.

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Sources:

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- <https://www.webmd.com/asthma/ss/slideshow-asthma-overview>