



Asthma Awareness Month

Event Planning Kit

Dear Asthma Advocate:

Each May, thousands of asthma advocates, groups, and organizations join together for Asthma Awareness Month to increase public awareness of the asthma epidemic and take action to get asthma under control in communities across the nation. Asthma affects more than 25 million people of all ages and races in the United States. Although asthma is widespread, public awareness of common asthma triggers and effective asthma management strategies remains limited.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) developed this Event Planning Kit to equip asthma programs to hold community-based asthma awareness and action events during Asthma Awareness Month. Inside you will find ideas and helpful tips for planning and running powerful community asthma events in schools, hospitals, clinics, and state capitols. You will also find a wealth of educational materials freely available online to enhance your events. We value your feedback on the usefulness of the enclosed materials and welcome any suggestions for future materials.

Also, in the spirit of Asthma Awareness Month, please consider becoming part of a growing network of community programs committed to improving the lives of people with asthma by joining AsthmaCommunityNetwork.org—our national asthma community's online network. By [joining the Network](#), you will have access to the latest resources and tools to help you build, sustain, and expand your asthma program. Join today and begin interacting with others who, like you, are leading the nation in the delivery of quality asthma care. EPA also can help publicize your Asthma Awareness Month event on the Network. [Submit your event online](#) to be added to the [calendar of events](#).

On behalf of EPA, I would like to thank you for working to increase asthma awareness and action in your community and for sponsoring an Asthma Awareness Month event. We look forward to assisting you with planning your asthma education events and hearing about your success! Working together, we can help communities take control of asthma.

Sincerely,

Kim Durkin
Asthma Awareness Month Coordinator, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency



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Asthma Awareness Activities

May is Asthma Awareness Month!

There is no better time to promote asthma education, including management of environmental triggers. EPA can help you raise awareness!

What You Can Do

Hold an asthma awareness event.

- Consider such events as an asthma walkathon or asthma health fair offering free pulmonary screenings and education on environmental asthma triggers and management.
- Determine whether any local leaders or celebrities have asthma and ask them to participate in your event.
- Have an EPA representative, health official, or community health worker provide their insights on the value of asthma awareness and management and highlight your organization's efforts to combat the disease.
- Contact area universities and medical schools and their allied health programs—such as nursing, respiratory therapy, or pharmacy—to get their students involved in your event.
- Invite local partners, community health workers, hospitals, and pharmaceutical companies to provide asthma educational displays and materials.
- Use [AsthmaCommunityNetwork.org](https://www.asthmacommunitynetwork.org) to [connect and collaborate](#) with local health care professionals and community organizations to pool resources and increase attention and publicity for the event.
- Publicize your event on the [AsthmaCommunityNetwork.org](https://www.asthmacommunitynetwork.org) [calendar of events](#), build a [social media strategy](#) to publicize Asthma Awareness Month and your event on social media websites like X (formerly Twitter) or Facebook, or publish event details in newsletters and patient information packets.

Educate the public through various media.

- Arrange to display and distribute asthma educational materials at public libraries, community centers, youth sporting events, local houses of worship, or other highly frequented places.
- Ask local hospitals, clinics, doctors' offices, pharmacies, health insurers, and managed care organizations to promote asthma education and display and distribute asthma educational materials.

- Ask local television and radio stations to include [public service announcements](#) about asthma in their programming.
- Schedule local TV and radio interviews to talk about asthma and your organization's programs to educate the public on how asthma is exacerbated by environmental asthma triggers, including secondhand smoke.
- Make regular educational posts on social media sites like X, Facebook, and Instagram.

Support asthma education in local schools.

- Introduce local schools, through such activities as a staff breakfast or lunch, [Indoor Air Quality \(IAQ\) Tools for Schools Action Kit](#) to help protect all children from asthma triggers.
- Contact state and local education associations to support asthma awareness activities in your local schools.
- Offer asthma education on environmental asthma triggers and management during in-service days for teachers, custodians, and other school staff or at PTA/PTO meetings or similar events for parents.
- Encourage teachers to incorporate asthma and the environment into appropriate lesson plans (e.g., science and health).
- Include asthma awareness information in school newsletters and other information sent home to parents.
- Conduct a walkthrough of your school to determine whether asthma triggers exist, and if so, develop and implement a remediation plan as soon as possible, using the [IAQ Tools for Schools Action Kit](#) for assistance.

Help educate the health care community.

- Conduct training in local hospitals or clinics about environmental asthma triggers and management.
- Use the National Environmental Education Foundation's [Environmental Management of Pediatric Asthma: Guidelines for Health Care Providers](#) and related training materials to train health care providers.

- Contact professional organizations to arrange professional educational seminars; resources include the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America's [Asthma Management and Education Program for Health Care Professionals](#) or the American Association for Respiratory Care's [AARC University](#).
- Ask local chapters of health professional organizations (e.g., respiratory therapists, nurses, pulmonologists, pediatricians) to include articles in their newsletters on the role that environmental asthma triggers play in the development and exacerbation of asthma and encourage them to incorporate environmental control in their patients' asthma management plans.
- Learn about [training opportunities for community health workers](#).

Enlist health insurers and managed care organizations to educate about asthma through the following actions.

- Place an article in a newsletter or e-bulletin to educate patients about asthma, environmental triggers, and ways to manage asthma.
- Distribute asthma materials to providers to educate them about comprehensive asthma management for patients.
- Co-sponsor a 1-day training for providers with a local chapter of the American Lung Association or Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America.
- Encourage hospitals and physicians to run asthma education, videos, and public service campaigns on closed circuit television in patient waiting rooms.
- Honor outstanding network providers with an "Asthma Award of the Year" for demonstrating excellent leadership in comprehensively managing patient asthma and increasing asthma awareness with patients.
- Conduct an [in-home environmental assessment](#) in homes in locations with a high prevalence of asthma. Display these homes as models to showcase the importance of managing indoor environmental triggers.
- Learn how to effectively talk about your program's value to potential funders and your community by creating a [value proposition](#).
- Review [billing codes for reimbursable services](#) to see what is covered across different states, as coverage for in-home asthma care and other asthma services continues to evolve throughout the United States.



Plan An Asthma Education Event

In Your School



- Gain the support of the school administration, nurse, librarian, or other key staff.
- Arrange a school-wide assembly with guest speakers, such as kids with asthma, local celebrities, doctors, or elected officials.
- Read children's books on asthma to students, such as *Taking Asthma to School* and *The ABCs of Asthma* by Kim Gosselin.
- Organize an asthma poster contest for children.
- Design asthma awareness bulletin boards or other displays for students and staff.
- Recruit local sponsors to provide giveaways or support; potential sponsors include area businesses and organizations, such as the local chapter of the American Lung Association or Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America.

EVENT SPOTLIGHT

Asthma Awareness Summit and Fair at James H. Law Elementary School

Where did the event take place?

James H. Law Elementary School, Houston, Texas

What happened?

The Asthma Awareness Summit and Fair at James H. Law Elementary School celebrated Asthma Awareness Month by providing the community with information on asthma and live demonstrations of asthma inhalers and spacers.

What resources were used?

An asthma video, handouts about asthma, pamphlets on mold in homes, home checklists for asthma triggers, asthma brochures from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Giveaways—including water bottles, booklets, coloring books, and bookmarks—were available to help promote asthma awareness.

How did this event help raise asthma awareness?

The event was open to all asthma students, parents, and staff at James H. Law Elementary School. About 40 people attended and received asthma information.

In Your Community

- Host your event at a local clinic or hospital, community center, public library, or other popular venue—or even your state capitol. Your state legislator can help you host an event at your state capitol.
- Recruit guest speakers—such as kids with asthma, doctors, nurses, community health care workers, or local government or celebrities—to describe how to live with asthma.
- Ask local businesses and organizations—such as your local chapter of the American Lung Association—to sponsor giveaways or provide support.
- Distribute asthma materials to attendees, including staff at the host location.
- Publicize the event through local newsletters, your state's website, social media, local news media, press releases, and AsthmaCommunityNetwork.org.

EVENT SPOTLIGHT

Frederick Memorial Healthcare System's Asthma Awareness Day

Where did the event take place?

Francis Scott Key Mall, Frederick, Maryland

What happened?

Representatives handed out materials about environmental asthma triggers, strategies for identifying and managing triggers, assessments of allergen exposures and sensitivity, self-management skills, and smoking cessation. They also had a mayoral proclamation and asthma presentations to share with the public.

What resources were used?

Asthma diagrams, educational brochures on asthma and asthma triggers, asthma action plans, information on medication and how to use asthma inhalers and spacers, and giveaways—including pencils, cups, and magnets—were given out at the event.

How did this event help raise asthma awareness?

The mayor gave a proclamation about asthma to approximately 300 people who attended the event.

Virtually

- Host a virtual Teams or Zoom meeting with local community advocates.
- Recruit regional experts and community health workers to be featured on a live webinar.
- Facilitate a Q&A on social media to gain more insight into what issues are affecting your community the most.
- Share asthma management tools and resources on social media, by email, and at virtual meetings or embed videos by [The Breathe Easies](http://TheBreatheEasies) or television ads on your website.

EVENT SPOTLIGHT

Allergy & Asthma Network's Asthma Awareness Month Virtual Fitness Challenge 2021

What happened?

A certified personal trainer developed a 1-month fitness program that included a warm-up routine, leg work, upper body work, core and balance work, yoga stretches, and a cool-down routine.

What resources were used?

Videos of workouts, a downloadable PDF calendar, "Tuesday Trainer Tips" on Facebook, and videos and downloadable PDFs about understanding and managing asthma were made available online. Participants were encouraged to post their workout pictures on social media to share their progress with the hashtag #asthmachallenge.

How did this event help raise asthma awareness?

Participants and their friends and families learned about positive ways to manage asthma while leading an active life.



Media Outreach Tips

Capture media attention for your asthma activity, event, or program and raise asthma awareness.

Below are tips to develop a successful media outreach approach.

Start with a good media list.

- Consider who is likely to want to tell your asthma story, such as local newspapers and radio stations, community newsletters, health producers at local news stations, hospital newsletters and bulletins, student newspapers at local schools and colleges, and social media websites.
- Consider who you want to tell your story.

Build successful relationships with the media.

- Identify national and local media, taking note of beat reporters who are assigned to a specific area or topic, such as community health or science. Contact beat reporters and editors to introduce yourself.
- Contact the right person. At major newspapers and television and radio stations, the assignment editor is the appropriate contact. Many reporters prefer email as the main form of communication.

Write a good pitch letter.

- Alert editors and reporters to your story and why they should cover asthma issues with a pitch letter.
- Keep it short. Begin with your most compelling information and explain the story in just a few paragraphs.
- Provide all the information journalists need to cover the story: “Who, What, When, Where, Why, and How.” Include possible sources and any relevant background material.

- If you are pitching a broadcast outlet, remember that they are interested in gathering video footage. Tell them about possible photo-ops or events.
- Find a “news peg.” Journalists often look for news pegs, which make a discussion of a broad issue relevant to the moment and newsworthy. Point out any news pegs, which can be breaking news or a simple event that brings a story into focus or makes it more timely.

Develop a media kit.

- Make it easy for reporters to write the story by putting together a media kit with a full range of information about asthma issues, environmental triggers, the specifics of your asthma event, statistical information about asthma from reputable sources, and simple graphics if you have them.
- Include your pitch letter, asthma facts, press release, calendar of events, your contact information, and any appropriate websites.

Follow up.

- Allow time for editors and reporters to look over your information before following up.
- Be prepared. Make notes for your calls with what you want to say and take notes during the calls. Try to anticipate any questions or objections and have an answer prepared.
- Be polite and brief. Editors and reporters are usually on a very tight schedule and will appreciate it if you get right to the point. Identify yourself, tell them why you are calling, and offer to answer any questions.

Asthma Facts and Infographics

Asthma continues to be a serious public health problem.

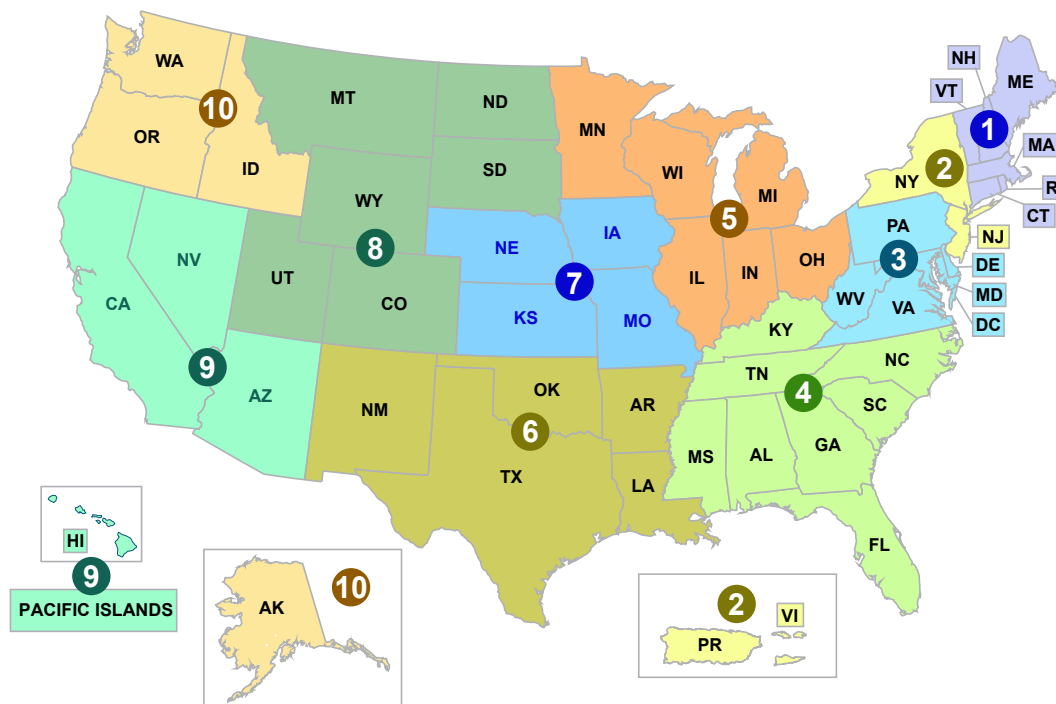
Being aware of the facts surrounding asthma and how to reduce exposure can help you raise asthma awareness.

- Download the [Asthma Facts](#) factsheet for recent data and statistics about asthma in the United States.
- Download [Asthma Triggers Infographics](#) for an overview of different triggers and how to reduce exposure to them.

EPA Regional Contacts

EPA can help you publicize your event and raise asthma awareness.

This list will help you reach your appropriate regional EPA contact.



- 1** **Region 1:** CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT, and 10 tribal nations
- 2** **Region 2:** EPA NJ, NY, PR, VI, and eight tribal nations
- 3** **Region 3:** DE, DC, MD, PA, VA, WV, and seven tribal nations
- 4** **Region 4:** AL, FL, GA, KY, MS, NC, SC, TN, and six tribal nations
- 5** **Region 5:** IL, IN, MI, MN, OH, WI, and 35 tribal nations
- 6** **Region 6:** AR, LA, NM, OK, TX, and 66 tribal nations
- 7** **Region 7:** IA, KS, MO, NE, and nine tribal nations
- 8** **Region 8:** CO, MT, ND, SD, UT, WY, and 28 tribal nations
- 9** **Region 9:** AS, AZ, CA, GU, HI, NV, and 148 tribal nations
- 10** **Region 10:** AK, ID, OR, WA, and 271 tribal nations

Visit www.AsthmaCommunityNetwork.org to find more organizations working to improve the lives of people with asthma.

Asthma Resources



www.epa.gov/asthma

Asthma Awareness

Asthma is a serious chronic respiratory disease that affects the quality of life of more than 25 million Americans, including an estimated 4 million children. Although there is no cure for asthma yet, asthma can be controlled through medical treatment and management of environmental triggers.



Scan the QR Codes below to access each EPA Asthma resource, or scan the code to the right to explore EPA's Asthma website.

Asthma Community Network

This network provides an interactive space for community-based asthma programs and the organizations that sponsor them to exchange best practices and lessons learned.



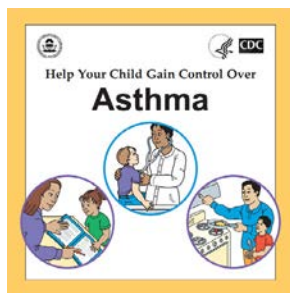
Strategies for Addressing Asthma in Homes

Using this home assessment tool, a trained home visitor can help find common asthma triggers in homes and discuss ways to reduce and remove triggers to make homes healthier.



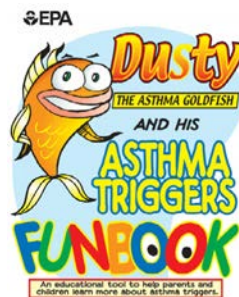
Help Your Child Gain Control Over Asthma

This brochure offers tips on how to manage asthma and follow simple steps to minimize exposure to asthma triggers found indoors and out.



Dusty the Goldfish and His Asthma Triggers Funbook

This educational activity book helps children learn more about asthma triggers.



Asthma Triggers Infographics

This collection of infographics provides a brief overview of different asthma triggers and ways to reduce exposure.



Climate change poses many threats to human health and well-being, including increasing the risk of asthma attacks. To learn more, visit EPA's Understanding the Connections Between Climate Change and Human Health webpage.



Download the above Asthma Awareness resource guide!