



## About Asthma Canada

We dream of a future without asthma. We work towards this vision by helping Canadians with asthma lead healthy lives through education, advocacy and research. Policy makers, we want to work with you to:

- Engage and empower the asthma community to strive for zero symptoms.
- Educate and inform people living with asthma so they can live a life free of symptoms and the adverse effects of traditional medications (e.g., oral corticosteroids), and reduce hospital visits, emergency care, the loss of school and work days, and the constraints placed on their daily lives.
- Support researchers working to find better treatments, and eventually a cure for asthma.
- Increase awareness of asthma and improve access to treatment options.
- Ensure excellence in service delivery through best practices such as evidence-based quality standards.

@AsthmaCanada  
#BreatheEasy #WorldAsthmaDay



# World Asthma Day



## What is asthma?

Breathing is something that most Canadians take for granted, but for Canadians who have asthma, breathing can be a challenge. Asthma is a chronic disease of the airways and symptoms typically include cough, wheeze, shortness of breath, chest tightness and increased mucus production.

More than 3.8 million Canadians live with asthma, of whom 2 million are Ontarians, including 1 in 4 children. In addition, it is estimated that approximately 200,000 Ontarians live with Severe Asthma, a subtype of the disease which is difficult to treat and control and is marked by

frequent life-threatening attacks and significantly higher healthcare costs.

A great deal can be done to improve the health outcomes for people living with asthma including increased use of proper diagnostics, encouraging the use of asthma action plans, and encouraging and publicly funding vaccinations for influenza and pneumococcal disease.

It is crucial to recognize that Severe Asthma is a complex condition, distinct from asthma, that requires care from specialists to diagnose and manage.

## What is Severe Asthma?

Severe Asthma is a life-threatening condition that can affect a patient's entire life by forcing them to make unwanted changes to their daily activities. Those who have Severe Asthma experience frequent flare-ups and severe worsening of asthma symptoms despite taking multiple high-dose inhalers. These attacks occur more than once per year and require use of emergency services,

hospitalization or steroid tablets, which are associated with substantial adverse effects such as weight gain, diabetes, osteoporosis, glaucoma, anxiety, cardiovascular disease and impaired immunity. Some people living with Severe Asthma may benefit from new biologic treatments to help manage their symptoms and reduce reliance on oral corticosteroids.

# What can we do for people with Severe Asthma?

## People with Severe Asthma deserve:

**1** A timely, straightforward referral when their Severe Asthma cannot be managed in primary care.

A timely, formal diagnosis by an expert team. **2**

Support to understand their type of Severe Asthma. **3**

Care that reduces the impact of Severe Asthma on their daily life. **4**

Not to be reliant on oral corticosteroids. **5**

To access quality care, regardless of where they live or where they choose to access it. **6**



# Asthma Facts



317 Canadians and 96 Ontarians are diagnosed with asthma every day.

5-10% of all asthma patients are affected by Severe Asthma. **70%** compromise their daily activities to accommodate Severe Asthma.

Severe Asthma is 5 times more expensive to treat than asthma.

Asthma attacks lead to approximately 70,000 emergency room visits annually and it is the leading cause of hospital admission in Canada.

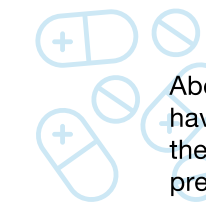


Each year, about 250 Canadians die from asthma. **250**



Many asthma hospitalizations are considered avoidable if appropriate treatment and management is provided at the primary care level.

Asthma is the leading cause of absenteeism from school and one of the leading causes of work loss. It is estimated that the direct and indirect costs of asthma will rise to \$4.19 billion by 2030.



About 1 in 10 Canadians with asthma have said that they have gone without their medication, either not filling a prescription or skipping a dose of medication, because of cost.

In 2016, there were 33,478 emergency room visits and 12,222 hospitalizations for asthma in Ontario.



"As a parent of an adolescent with persistent severe asthma there is a list of things it means to me. It means sleepless nights sitting bedside counting breaths. It means learning and understanding medical jargon usually only heard on tv drama shows. It means monitoring daily (hourly) levels and knowing when to call it quits with home action plans and make the trek to the ER. It means worrying every time the school calls during the day. It means being not just a mom but also a pharmacist, a nurse, a lab tech, a cheerleader, a teacher for when he misses more school than he attends and a great actor in order to hide your fear while watching your child turn blue. It means strength and power and it means enjoying every "good" day because a bad one is just around the corner."

Esty, Vaughan, Ontario

"Our son is now 5 years old. The past five years have been very difficult- between hospital stays, multiple operations, multiple doctors' appointments and running back to the pharmacy for his prescriptions. He tries to lead to a normal life, and we let him try. He has tried sports and is doing well in school, but we fear each day when he will have another severe attack. Asthma affects the whole family not just the person with asthma."

Susan Suess, Ontario