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Asthma facts and FAQs

Facts and FAQs

Is asthma serious?

Imagine being paralysed by fear as you struggle to breathe, unable to speak, unable to ask for help. That's what an asthma attack feels like.

There are 5.4 million people with asthma in the UK, which means asthma affects one in five households. Asthma is not just an excuse to skip PE. For a quarter of a million people with severe asthma, even climbing the stairs can feel like a marathon, never mind going outside their home.

Three people die every single day because of asthma. But most of these deaths could have been avoided. Asthma UK is the charity dedicated to changing this.

Key facts for journalists

- 5.4 million people in the UK are currently receiving treatment for asthma: 1.1 million children (1 in 11) and 4.3 million adults (1 in 12).
- Asthma prevalence is thought to have plateaued since the late 1990s, although the UK still has some of the highest rates in Europe and on average 3 people a day die from asthma.
- There were 1,143 deaths from asthma in the UK in 2010 (16 of these were children aged 14 and under)
- An estimated 75% of hospital admissions for asthma are avoidable and as many as 90% of the deaths from asthma are preventable.

Asthma across the UK

- In Northern Ireland 182,000 people (1 in 10) are currently receiving treatment for asthma. This includes 36,000 children and 146,000 adults.
- In Scotland, 368,000 people (1 in 14) are currently receiving treatment for asthma. This includes 72,000 children and 296,000 adults.
- In Wales 314,000 people (1 in 10) are currently receiving treatment for asthma. This consists of 59,000 children and 256,000 adults.

Children, parents and asthma

- One in 11 children has asthma and it is the most common long-term medical condition.
- On average there are two children with asthma in every classroom in the UK.
- The UK has among the highest prevalence rates of asthma symptoms in children worldwide.
- Every 18 minutes a child is admitted to hospital in the UK because of their asthma.

The costs of asthma

- The NHS spends around £1 billion a year treating and caring for people with asthma.

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2. It's not 'just' asthma [\(/Blog/its-not-just-asthma/\)](/Blog/its-not-just-asthma/)
3. 2 million people unaware they are at risk of an asthma attack [\(/News/2-million-people-unaware-they-are-at-risk-of-an-asthma-attack/\)](/News/2-million-people-unaware-they-are-at-risk-of-an-asthma-attack/)
4. End prescription charges for people with long-term conditions [\(/News/end-prescription-charges-for-people-with-long-term-conditions/\)](/News/end-prescription-charges-for-people-with-long-term-conditions/)
5. Advice for Muslims with asthma during Ramadan [\(/News/advice-for-muslims-with-asthma-during-ramadan/\)](/News/advice-for-muslims-with-asthma-during-ramadan/)
6. "How cycling has improved my asthma" [\(/Blog/how-cycling-has-improved-my-asthma/\)](/Blog/how-cycling-has-improved-my-asthma/)
7. Scientists to develop a 21st century approach to tackling severe asthma [\(/News/scientists-to-develop-a-21st-century-approach-to-tackling-severe-asthma/\)](/News/scientists-to-develop-a-21st-century-approach-to-tackling-severe-asthma/)
8. Will complementary therapies help me to control my asthma? [\(/FAQs/will-complementary-therapies-help-me-to-control-my-asthma/\)](/FAQs/will-complementary-therapies-help-me-to-control-my-asthma/)
9. Asthma UK appoints new Chief Executive [\(/News/asthma-uk-appoints-new-chief-executive/\)](/News/asthma-uk-appoints-new-chief-executive/)
10. What you must do during an

• In 2008/09 up to 1.1 million working days were lost due to breathing or lung problems.

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**Asthma UK**

Rebecca was diagnosed with asthma at the age of 15, at which point it was considered mild and under control. But since 2008, her condition has deteriorated rapidly and she has been admitted to hospital several times in recent years and had a number of “near misses”.

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