



Controlling Asthma

The Southwest Michigan Asthma Coalition (SMAC) is part of a state-wide network of eleven coalitions that operate under the umbrella of the Asthma Initiative of Michigan. Local coalition members include Berrien County Health Department, Lakeland staff educators, school nurses, Berrien County ISD, area physicians and several drug companies. "Our coalition covers Berrien, Cass and Van Buren counties and focuses on children with asthma," says Erin Salvagione, coordinator of the SMAC. The coalition's mission is to improve the effective management of asthma through education

and community action. Its strategy is to emphasize consistent disease management through the use of Asthma Action Plans. If each child, or adult for that matter, had a plan prescribed and updated by a physician in place at school, at home and at play or sports events, every person in contact with that child would know exactly what to do in the case of an asthma attack.

"We've been working hard since the coalition began in 2002 to provide asthma education and emphasize the need for consistent asthma management by connecting the physician to the child, and the

Exposure to tobacco smoke can cause shortness of breath or an episode for those who suffer from asthma.

STAY AWAY FROM TOBACCO SMOKE!



child to the home, school and athletic events through asthma action plans," added Erin. **"Our message is clear: asthma cannot be cured, but it can be controlled. Expect nothing less!"**

For more information about the Southwest Michigan Asthma Coalition, or to schedule a presentation for your school, athletic or community group or to obtain a copy of the Michigan Asthma Resource Kit for your health practice, contact **Erin Salvagione at (269) 927-5148.**

Berrien County Health

Department:
Preventing Disease,
Prolonging Life and
Protecting the
Health of the
Community.

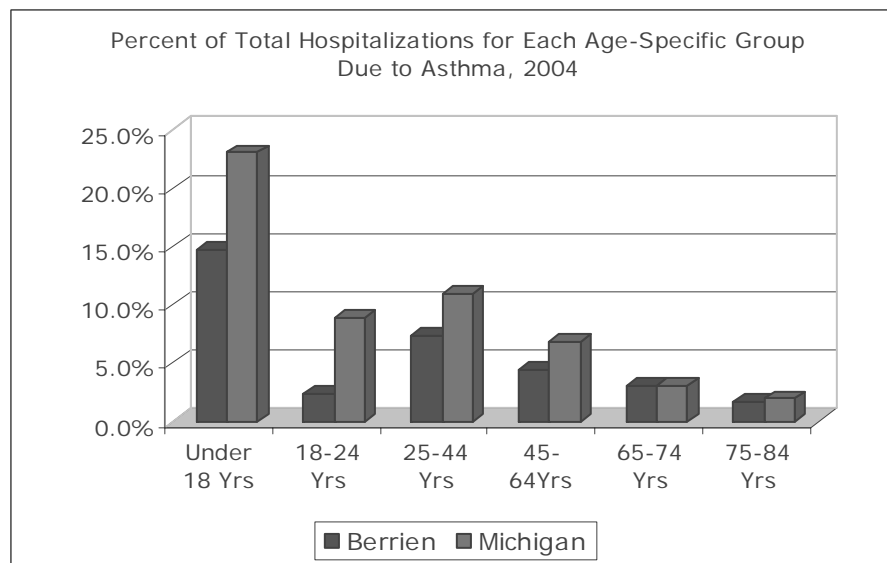


REDUCE YOUR RISK

June is reduce your risk month. The Berrien County Health Department will provide you with information throughout the month on chronic health conditions such as diabetes, arthritis, asthma, and substance abuse. Chronic diseases can often be prevented or minimized by healthy eating and exercise. For more information on any of these topics, please call the health department at 926-7121. Happy Summer!

ASTHMA STATISTICS

Asthma is the most common chronic disease among school-aged children in the United States. About 1 in every 15 children in school has asthma. Asthma was the second leading cause of hospitalizations among children under 18 years of age accounting for 14.8% of hospitalizations among this age group in Berrien County in 2004. However, Berrien County had fewer hospitalizations due to asthma for all age groups as compared to Michigan. 59.2% of hospitalizations due to asthma occurred in females.



VISIT
www.getastmahelp.org
to find more information on making an Asthma Action Plan for you or your child so that you are prepared next time an attack occurs.



Early Signs of an Asthma Attack

Changes in breathing

Early signs may include

- ◆ Coughing
- ◆ Chest tightness
- ◆ Throat tightness
- ◆ Breathing through the mouth

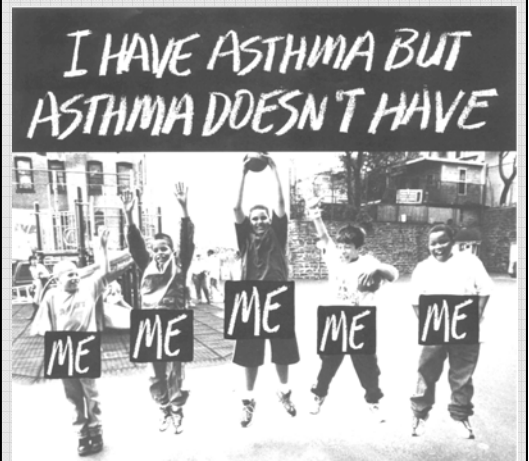
Later signs may include:

- ◆ Wheezing
- ◆ Shortness of breath
- ◆ Rapid breathing

Verbal Complaints

Often a child who is familiar with asthma will know that an episode is about to happen. They might say:

- ◆ "My chest is tight."
- ◆ "My chest hurts."
- ◆ "I cannot catch my breath."
- ◆ "My mouth is dry."
- ◆ "My chin (or neck) itches."
- ◆ Speech may be in very short, choppy sentences.



The Berrien County Commissioners passed the Clean Indoor Air Regulation which went into effect on June 1, 2007. The new regulation requires that smoking be prohibited in all indoor, enclosed workplaces and public places in Berrien County. The Berrien County Health Department worked hard to get the regulation passed in order to protect its citizens from the harmful effects of secondhand smoke. Those who suffer from asthma should be able to breathe clean air!



The Berrien County Health Department has five locations to serve you:

Benton Harbor

769 Pipestone
P.O. Box 706
926-7121

M-139 Office

2106 S. M-139
927-5623

School Based

870 Colfax Ave
925-4500

Niles

1205 N. Front St.
684-2800

Three Oaks

21 N. Elm
756-2008

Or visit us on the web at www.berriencohthdept.org

This page is sponsored by the Berrien County Health Department

