

# Asthma in the Hispanic/Latino Community



Asthma is a chronic condition that affects breathing. Anyone can develop asthma, but some groups in the Hispanic/Latino community have especially high rates. Here's what to know—and what to do to manage the condition if you have it.

## IS ASTHMA COMMON AMONG HISPANIC/LATINO PEOPLE IN THE UNITED STATES?

Overall, Hispanic/Latino people have lower rates of asthma than other U.S. racial and ethnic groups. But that doesn't tell the whole story. The Hispanic/Latino community in the United States includes people from a wide range of Spanish-speaking backgrounds, and asthma rates among them vary greatly. Puerto Ricans, for example, have among the highest asthma rates in the U.S. But Mexican Americans have a relatively low rate. Age plays a role, too. Hispanic/Latino children are more likely to be hospitalized or even die from asthma compared to white children.

### BY THE NUMBERS

Puerto Ricans have **2x the asthma rate** of the Hispanic population overall.

Puerto Rican kids are **3x more likely** to have asthma than white children.

Hispanic/Latino children are **40% more likely** to die from asthma.



National Heart, Lung,  
and Blood Institute

**LEARN MORE**  
BREATHE BETTER®

[nhlbi.nih.gov/breathebetter](https://nhlbi.nih.gov/breathebetter)

# Asthma in the Hispanic/Latino Community



## WHY IS THE ASTHMA BURDEN GREATER IN SOME HISPANIC/LATINO COMMUNITIES?

Researchers are still studying the reasons for these differences. They include:

### ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE

More than a third of Hispanic/Latino people say they have no consistent source of medical care. This can make managing a disease like asthma more difficult. Having a trusted healthcare provider who shares the culture or language can make controlling asthma easier.

### AIR POLLUTION

Hispanic/Latino people most commonly live in urban areas, where pollution is high and indoor air quality can be hard to control.

### WORKPLACE IRRITANTS

Exposure to certain dusts, chemical fumes, and molds can cause asthma to develop. Many Hispanic/Latino people work in construction and agriculture jobs where these irritants can be found.

### FAMILY HISTORY

People who have a parent who has asthma have a higher risk of developing the condition.

## WHAT CAN I DO TO BETTER MANAGE MY ASTHMA?

Here's where to start:

### KNOW THE SYMPTOMS

Problems like coughing, wheezing, chest tightness, and shortness of breath are all signs of asthma.

### TALK TO A HEALTHCARE PROVIDER

Together you can create an asthma action plan that works for you. This plan will help you:

- Think about the situations when your asthma seems worse. What seems to trigger your symptoms? Talk to a doctor about ways to try to avoid those situations.
- Understand what medications to take and when to take them. The plan should also explain what to do in an emergency.
- Learn to keep track of your symptoms between visits to know if your plan is working.

## THE GOOD NEWS?

With the right treatment plan, most people with asthma can lead full and active lives.

[nhlbi.nih.gov/breathebetter](https://nhlbi.nih.gov/breathebetter)



National Heart, Lung,  
and Blood Institute

LEARN MORE  
BREATHE BETTER®

NIH Publication No. 23-HL-5252  
May 2023