

Asthma Vocabulary

Acute conditions: Health conditions that have a sudden onset with symptoms are often short-lived. Examples include an asthma attack or the flu.

Air quality index: an index for reporting daily air quality. The index tells you how clean or polluted your air is, and what associated health effects might be a concern for you.

Air Quality Standards: The level of pollutants prescribed by regulations that are not to be exceeded during a given time in a defined area.

Allergen: A substance that causes an allergic reaction in individuals sensitive to it.

Asthma: is an inflammatory disorder of the airways, which causes attacks of wheezing, shortness of breath, chest tightness, and coughing

Asthma triggers: things in the environment, such as air pollution, dust, mold, tobacco smoke, pollen, pet hair, or dander that can cause an asthma attack or asthma symptoms.

Chronic conditions: Health conditions that develop or worsen over months or years. The specific causes are often difficult to determine, and include some of the most common diseases in the U.S. such as asthma, diabetes and cancer.

Clean Air Act: A major piece of national legislation first passed in 1970 and amended in 1977 and 1990. This act authorized federal and state regulations to limit air emissions from both industrial (i.e., factories) and mobile (i.e., car) sources and established national ambient (outdoor) air quality standards (NAAQS).

Environmental justice: The concept recognizing that all people are entitled equal protection from environmental and health hazards.

Epidemiology: The study of the sources and causes of disease in humans.

Genetics: a discipline of biology, is the science of genes, heredity, and variation in living organisms

Health disparity: particular type of health difference that is closely linked with social, economic, and/or environmental disadvantage.

Inhalation: The exposure route by which substances in the air enter the lungs through breathing.

Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE): The Maryland state agency created in 1987 to protect and preserve the state's natural resources. MDE works with national, state and local officials to comply with existing environmental laws.

Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH): The state agency in Maryland responsible for issues affecting the health of residents.

Ozone: Found in two layers of the atmosphere, the stratosphere and the troposphere. In the stratosphere (the atmospheric layer 7 to 10 miles or more above the earth's surface) ozone is a natural form of oxygen that provides a protective layer shielding the earth from ultraviolet radiation. In the troposphere (the layer extending up 7 to 10 miles from the earth's surface), ozone is a chemical oxidant and a major component of air pollution that can seriously impair the respiratory system. Ozone is regulated under the Clean Air Act.

Population Demographics: The traits of a given population with regard to age, race, ethnicity, gender, income and other measures

Socioeconomic status: Refers to a measure of an individual or group's economic and social characteristics including income, education and occupation.

Respiratory disease: Disease affecting the respiratory system (the airways and lung). Asthma is one of the most common respiratory diseases.

Social Determinants of Health: Conditions in the social, physical, and economic environment in which people are born, live, play work, and age. These conditions impact a wide range of health and quality of life outcomes.