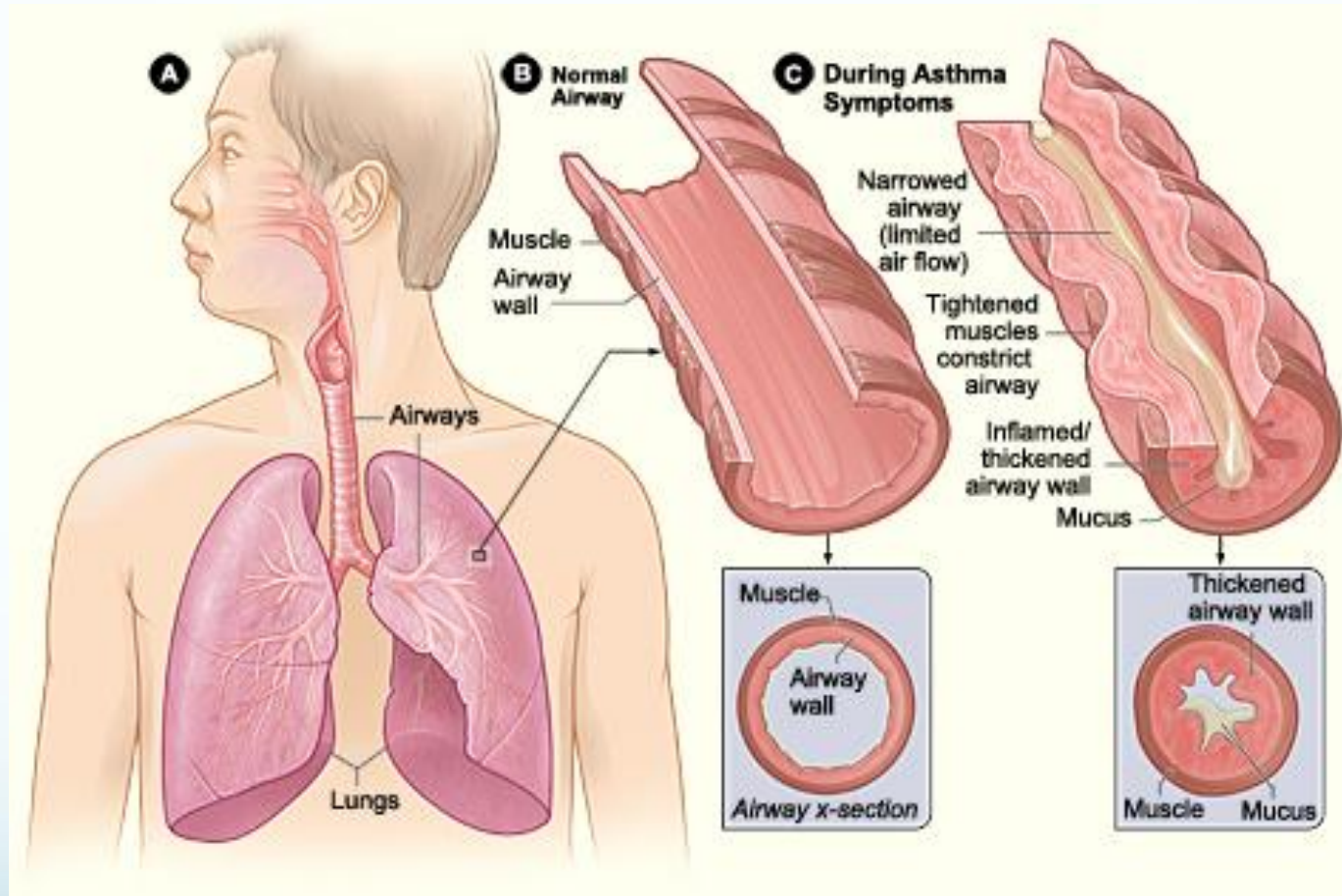


Asthma, the Environment and Your Health



Environmental
Public Health and
Chronic Disease

Asthma: What is it?



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

How do you get asthma?



- We don't know for sure how someone develops asthma. It is believed to be caused by a combination of genetic and environmental factors.
- Scientists are studying asthma to learn more about its causes and how it might be prevented.

What is an asthma attack?



- Asthma attacks (wheezing, tightness of chest, coughing) can be very mild or sometimes can be very severe.

Asthma attack triggers



Air Quality Index (AQI) Values	Levels of Health Concern
0 to 50	Good
51-100	Moderate
101-150	Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups
151-200	Unhealthy
201-300	Very Unhealthy
301 to 500	Hazardous

- Asthma attacks can be caused by things (triggers) in the environment, such as air pollution, dust, mold, tobacco smoke, pollen, pet hair or dander.

Is there a cure for asthma?



- Unfortunately, there is no known “cure” for asthma, but there are ways to keep asthma under control, such as taking medications, staying indoors on poor air quality days, and avoiding tobacco smoke.
- Scientists continue to seek a “cure” for asthma

Who has asthma?



- Asthma affects people of all ages, races, backgrounds and geographic locations
- In 2009 in the United States
 - 17.5 million (7.7%) adults have asthma
 - 7.1 million (9.6%) children have asthma

Some populations suffer more from asthma



- People living near factories and other types of industrial facilities have higher rates of asthma
- People living near highways or areas with lots of traffic have higher rates of asthma

What can we do to help?



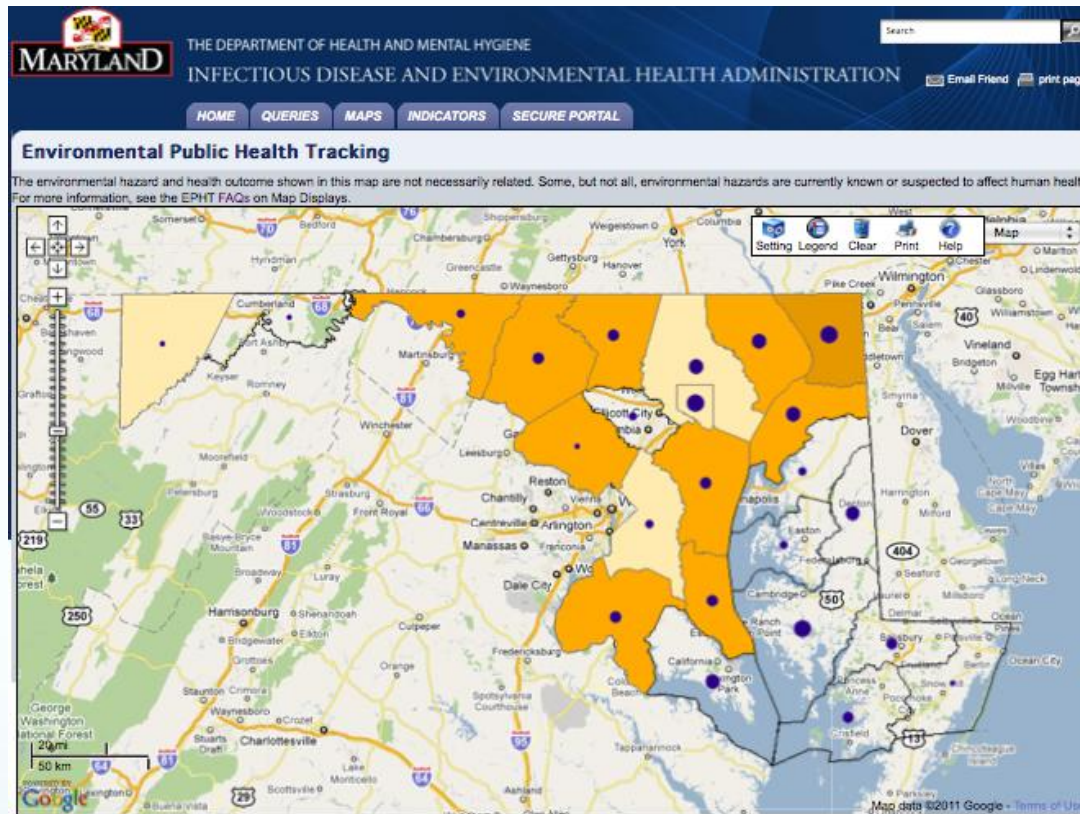
- Reduce pollution in the air:
 - Pass laws and regulations to protect air quality
 - Make behavior changes to help keep the air cleaner (bike to work, conserve energy, don't smoke)
 - Develop cleaner cars and factories

What Are Researchers Doing ?



- Studying asthma to learn more about causes and ways to prevent it.
- Monitoring air quality and environmental conditions affecting people with asthma.

Tracking Pollution



- Maryland monitors ozone and other pollutants and asthma rates by county.
- Surveillance of public health data involves continuous collection, analysis and interpretation of data and information to inform policies, track progress and serve as a warning system in case of emergencies.

Discussion



- What kind of information or research do you think would be helpful for reducing asthma rates?
- What are things that your school, community, or local businesses can do to help prevent asthma and reduce symptoms?



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