

ASTHMA IN CHILDREN



Asthma is one of the most common long-term health problems in children. In Australia, it's the main cause of disease burden for school-age children. It can affect how children sleep, play, learn, and enjoy daily life, which makes it a big challenge for both children and their families.

Why asthma is a big deal for children

- 1 It often starts young and lasts a long time**
The first signs of asthma often appear in early childhood, and asthma can last a lifetime. Even if symptoms get better for a while, the lungs can still be sensitive. This means people need to keep managing it as they grow older.
- 2 Currently there's no cure, only control**
Asthma can be well controlled with medicine and avoiding triggers, but currently it can't be completely cured. People need to take care of their asthma to stay healthy.
- 3 It affects daily life**
Asthma can make life harder for children if it's not well managed. Even if it's not dangerous all the time, asthma can cause children to miss school, visit the doctor or even hospital often, and feel anxious or left out. It can affect their learning and emotional health.
- 4 It can be unpredictable**
Even children with mild asthma can suddenly have a serious asthma attack. This can be scary and might stop them from joining in sports or playing outside, which can be hard for the whole family.
- 5 But it doesn't have to stop them**
The good news is that asthma can be controlled. With the right care, children with asthma can still enjoy sports, play with friends, and live a full, active life.
- 6 It affects a lot of children**
Around 386,000 children under 15 have asthma in Australia —that's about 8 out of every 100 children that age. It also has a big effect on the whole community, taking into account hospital visits, medicine costs, and time missed from school or work.

According to the latest [Burden of Disease study](#) and [Health of Children report](#), the most challenging health condition for school-age children (5-14 years) is asthma, followed by four mental health conditions (autism, anxiety, depressive and conduct disorders).

"Burden of Disease" is a term used to show how much a health problem affects someone's life - both how they feel day to day and how long they live.

ASTHMA IN CHILDREN



ABOUT
386,000

Australians under the age of 15 (8.2%) have asthma^{1,3}
10.1% of boys (1 in 10 boys)
6.2% of girls (1 in 16 girls)

ASTHMA WAS THE
1ST LEADING CAUSE

of disease burden in 2024 for young and school-age children
(aged 1–4 years and 5–14 years)^{2,3}

4th leading cause for older teenagers
(aged 15–19 years)²



42%

of Australians aged 0–14 with asthma had to take time off school in 2014/15 due to their asthma⁴

HOSPITALS



14,789

hospitalisations for asthma were in children under 15 years of age in 2024/25⁴

45%

of all asthma hospitalisations were in children under 15 in 2024/25⁴



ONLY **2 IN 3**

children (67%) had an Asthma Action Plan in 2022¹



ONLY **1 IN 2**

children (49%) used asthma medication in the last two weeks in 2022¹



4X Children aged 5–9 were at least 4 times more likely to be hospitalised for asthma than people aged 15–74 years in 2023/24⁶

EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT (ED)

ABOUT **27,500**

ED visits for asthma were in children under 15 in 2024/25⁶



1.5X

Boys under 15 were 1.5 times more likely than girls the same age to go to ED for asthma in 2024/25⁶



For medical advice on how to best treat and manage your asthma, speak to your doctor or pharmacist.
To speak with an Asthma Educator, call 1800 ASTHMA (1800 278 462) or visit asthma.org.au

1. Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), National Health Survey 2022: Asthma [Internet, cited 2025 Aug 26]. www.abs.gov.au/statistics/health/health-conditions-and-risks/asthma/latest-release 2. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), Australian Burden of Disease Study 2024 [Internet, cited 2026 Aug 7]. www.aihw.gov.au/reports/burden-of-disease/australian-burden-of-disease-study-2024 3. AIHW, Health of Children [Internet, cited 2026 Aug 7]. <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/children-youth/health-of-children> 4. AIHW, Principal diagnosis data cubes. Separation statistics by principle diagnosis, 2024–25 [Internet, cited 2026 Aug 7]. www.aihw.gov.au/reports/hospitals/principal-diagnosis-data-cubes/contents/summary 5. ABS, Health Service Usage and Health Related Actions Australia 2014–15. www.abs.gov.au 6. AIHW, Asthma [Internet, cited 2026 Aug 7]. www.aihw.gov.au/reports/chronic-respiratory-conditions/asthma