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Key facts

- Asthma is a major noncommunicable disease (NCD), affecting both children and adults, and is the most common chronic disease among children.
- Inflammation and narrowing of the small airways in the lungs cause asthma symptoms, which can be any combination of cough, wheeze, shortness of breath and chest tightness.
- Asthma affected an estimated 262 million people in 2019 (1) and caused 455 000 deaths.
- Inhaled medication can control asthma symptoms and allow people with asthma to lead a normal, active life.
- Avoiding asthma triggers can also help to reduce asthma symptoms.
- Most asthma-related deaths occur in low- and lower-middle-income countries, where under-diagnosis and under-treatment is a challenge.
- WHO is committed to improving the diagnosis, treatment and monitoring of asthma to reduce the global burden of NCDs and make progress towards universal health coverage.

Related

[Global health estimates 2019](#)[NCD country capacity survey](#)[Global action plan for the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases 2013–2020](#)[The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#)[WHO package of essential noncommunicable \(PEN\) disease interventions for primary health care](#)[WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control](#)[MPOWER](#)