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2012 ASTHMA FACTS

- Asthma is a chronic inflammation of the lung airways that causes coughing, chest tightness, wheezing or shortness of breath.
- More than 25.7 million Americans have asthma; 7 million are under 18.
- Asthma mortality is almost 4,000 deaths per year.
- Patients with asthma reported 13.9 million visits to a doctor's office and 1.4 million visits to hospital outpatient departments.
- Asthma results in 456,000 hospitalizations and 1.75 million emergency room visits annually.
- Asthma is the most common chronic illness in childhood, accounting for 10.5 million missed school days each year. It also accounts for 14.2 million lost work days for adults.
- The estimated economic cost of asthma is \$20.7 billion annually.
- Direct medical expenditures associated with asthma, including hospital care, physicians' services and medications, are estimated at \$15.6 billion annually.
- Indirect medical expenditures, including decreased worker productivity and lost work days for adults suffering from asthma or caring for children with asthma, and other losses total \$5.1 billion annually.
- Triggers that can initiate an asthma attack include allergens such as pollen, dust, animal dander, drugs and food additives, as well as viral respiratory infections and physical exertion.
- Asthma is often hereditary.
- Weather conditions such as extremely dry, wet or windy weather can worsen an asthma condition.
- Effective asthma treatment includes monitoring the disease with a peak flow meter, identifying and avoiding allergen triggers, using drug therapies including bronchodilators and anti-inflammatory agents, and developing an emergency plan for severe attacks.
- There are two types of asthma medications: long-term control and quick-relief medications. Long-term control medications are preventive, taken daily to achieve and maintain control of asthma symptoms. Quick-relief medications are used to treat asthma attacks. They relieve symptoms rapidly and are taken on an as-needed basis.
- One of the most effective medications for controlling asthma is inhaled corticosteroids, which are anti-inflammatory medications. Taken early and as directed, these well-tolerated and safe medications can improve asthma control and normalize lung function.

- Immunotherapy or allergy shots should be considered if asthma is triggered by exposure to unavoidable allergens, or if symptoms occur three days a week and more than two nights a month. The shots are especially helpful when symptoms occur year-round or are not easily controlled with medication.
- Allergists are the medical specialists with the most expertise in treating asthma. An allergist can find the source of your suffering and stop it. To find an allergist, visit AllergyAndAsthmaRelief.org.

2012 NASAL ALLERGY FACTS

- Allergic rhinitis, often called hay fever, is a common condition that causes symptoms such as sneezing, stuffy nose, runny nose, watery eyes and itching of the nose, eyes or the roof of the mouth.
- These nasal allergies are estimated to affect approximately 60 million people in the United States, and its prevalence is increasing affecting as many as 30 percent of adults and up to 40 percent of children.
- 17.9 million adults and 7.1 million children have been diagnosed with hay fever in the last year.
- More than 13.4 million visits to physician offices, hospital outpatient departments and emergency departments were due to allergic rhinitis.
- Allergic rhinitis can be seasonal or perennial. Symptoms of seasonal allergic rhinitis occur in spring, summer and/or early fall. They are usually caused by allergic sensitivity to pollens from trees, grasses or weeds, or to airborne mold spores. People with perennial allergic rhinitis experience symptoms year-round. It is generally caused by sensitivity to house dust mites, animal dander, cockroaches and/or mold spores. Underlying or hidden food allergies rarely cause perennial nasal symptoms.
- Once diagnosed, allergic rhinitis treatment options are: avoidance, eliminating or decreasing your exposure to the irritants or allergens that trigger your symptoms, medication and immunotherapy (allergy shots).
- Immunotherapy (allergy shots) helps reduce hay fever symptoms in about 85 percent of people with allergic rhinitis.
- Allergic diseases, which include asthma, are the fifth most prevalent chronic diseases in all ages, and the third most common in children.