

Asthma Attacks Are Being Underestimated in Canada, New Survey Finds - World Asthma Day

Asthma Canada Launches New C.A.R.E. Campaign on World Asthma Day to Help Improve Asthma Attack Outcomes

TORONTO,, ON, CANADA, May 5, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- On World Asthma Day, Asthma Canada is releasing findings from its national Asthma Attacks Survey, completed by more than 1,000 people across Canada, revealing critical gaps in how potentially fatal asthma attacks are understood, recognized, and managed.



Key findings from Asthma Canada's Asthma Attack Survey include:



We were completely caught off guard and had no idea what was happening."

Rachel Anne Normand

- 74% of respondents living with asthma reported feeling frightened or extremely frightened during an asthma attack.
- 26% of respondents living with asthma felt their symptoms were downplayed or not taken seriously during an asthma attack.
- While 69% of people who live or work with asthma said

they were confident or very confident they could recognize the symptoms of an asthma attack, only 24% of those without asthma said the same.

- 37% of respondents living with asthma do not have an [Asthma Action Plan](#), a document recommended for all people with asthma to help prevent attacks and improve quality of life.
- When witnessing an asthma attack in a stranger, people living with or working with asthma were far more likely to help manage the attack than those without asthma (50% vs. 17%).

"About six people die from asthma every week in Canada, and research from around the world shows that many of these deaths could be prevented," said Jeffrey Beach, President & CEO of Asthma Canada. "The stats from our survey highlight a significant gap in perceptions of asthma as a serious chronic condition and this is a major part of the problem."

To help address these gaps, Asthma Canada is launching its new [C.A.R.E. framework](#) during Asthma Awareness Month (May). Designed to be simple, memorable, and actionable, C.A.R.E. helps people recognize the signs of an asthma attack and respond quickly and effectively.

Asthma Attack = Emergency

Signs of an asthma attack include:

- Distressed breathing
- Wheezing
- Difficulty speaking
- Persistent coughing
- Lips or fingernails turning blue or grey
- Chest tightness

If an asthma attack happens: C.A.R.E.:

C – Calm: Keep them calm and reassure them

A – Air: Sit them upright and encourage slow breathing

R – Rescue Inhaler: Help them find and use their rescue inhaler (usually blue). Use a spacer if available

E – Emergency: Call 911 if there is no inhaler or no improvement after using the inhaler

Learn more at: asthma.ca/care



Jeffrey Beach | President & CEO of Asthma Canada



Jacob Normand

(C.A.R.E. guidance provides general public information and does not replace personalized advice or an Asthma Action Plan from a healthcare professional.)

“I had no idea my son Jacob had asthma until he suffered a severe asthma attack at just three years old,” said Rachel Anne Normand from Ottawa. “We were completely caught off guard and had no idea what was happening. I am so thankful that we sought medical help straight away, as I know this is not always the case.”

The survey also revealed concerning gaps in follow-up care after an asthma attack. Only 52% of respondents living with asthma said they spoke with a healthcare professional following an

attack, and just 28% had their Asthma Action Plan updated.

“Following an asthma attack, people need to check in with their healthcare professionals,” Beach added. “Asthma attacks and symptoms are far too often normalized and need to be taken seriously. The first step is downloading an Asthma Action Plan and completing it with your healthcare provider.”

This Asthma Awareness Month, Asthma Canada and its partners are shining a light on asthma attacks to improve outcomes for people across the country. Visit asthma.ca/asthma-awareness-month-2026 to get involved.

About Asthma in Canada:

- Over 4.8 million people are living with asthma in Canada
 - o Including over 900,000 children under 19 and over 900,000 adults over 65
- As many as 465,000 people living with asthma in Canada have severe asthma
 - o Including over 45,000 children under 19
- Asthma is Canada’s third most common chronic disease
- Over 300 families lose a loved one to asthma each year
- \$4.2 billion is the expected annual cost of asthma to the Canadian economy by 2030
- 317 people are diagnosed with asthma every day in Canada
- 80,000 emergency room visits occur each year due to asthma attacks
- Asthma is 40% more prevalent among First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities than the general population

About Asthma Canada:

Asthma Canada is the only national healthcare charity solely dedicated to improving the quality of life for people living with asthma and respiratory allergies. For over 50 years, Asthma Canada has served as the national voice for people in Canada living with asthma. Its mission is to help people with asthma lead healthy lives through education, advocacy, and research, with a vision of a future without asthma. For more information, visit asthma.ca.

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