

Don't let  
Asthma

take  
your  
breath  
away

Nationwide  
Asthma Screening  
Program

ACAAI American College  
of Allergy, Asthma  
& Immunology  
*Follow the Leader Into the Future*

This program is supported by  
AstraZeneca 

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## NATIONWIDE ASTHMA SCREENING PROGRAM USES DECADE OF SUCCESS TO FIND MORE PEOPLE WITH UNDIAGNOSED AND UNDERTREATED ASTHMA

ARLINGTON HEIGHTS, Ill., May 1, 2007 – Adults and children with breathing problems can find out if asthma is taking their breath away during the 11th Annual Nationwide Asthma Screening Program, sponsored by the American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology (ACAAI).

### At-a-Glance

- Free asthma screenings are available through the Nationwide Asthma Screening Program
- 23 million Americans have asthma
- 80 percent of children with asthma develop symptoms before age 5
- Visit [www.acaai.org](http://www.acaai.org) to find a screening

Allergists, who are asthma specialists, will bring the free asthma screening program to 300 locations across the country during National Asthma and Allergy Awareness Month in May. Supported by AstraZeneca, the program screened more than 100,000 people and referred more than half for a professional diagnosis in its first decade.

In addition to identifying people who might be at risk for asthma, the screening program provides an opportunity for those who already know they have asthma to talk with an allergist about their disease and how to keep symptoms under control.

“A cough that bothers you at night, shortness of breath when going up stairs, colds that go right to your chest – these can all be symptoms of asthma, but few people recognize them,” said allergist John Winder, M.D., chair of the Nationwide Asthma Screening Program. “Instead, people often make unnecessary lifestyle compromises to live with their condition and there’s no reason to do that. People with breathing problems, or who think their asthma could be better managed, should attend a free asthma screening.”

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Asthma affects about 23 million Americans including 9 million children, and is responsible for about 4,000 deaths each year. Although the exact cause of asthma is unknown, many treatments are available to control this chronic inflammation of airways in the lungs and related symptoms.

An asthma attack often is triggered by allergens such as pollen, dust and animal dander, certain drugs and food additives, viral respiratory infections and physical exertion.

Once asthma is diagnosed, experts recommend aggressive treatment with allergen avoidance and medication. Because inflammation of the lungs and airways plays a central role in the development of asthma, the most effective medications are those that reduce inflammation. Studies show inhaled corticosteroids are the most potent and effective anti-inflammatory medications for asthma, improving control of the disease and normalizing lung function.

Allergists, working with community physicians and allied health professionals, conduct the free asthma screenings at shopping malls, civic centers, health fairs and other accessible locations throughout the country. This year the screening program will focus on increasing awareness of asthma in young children and will include the distribution of a new brochure to parents and caregivers of children under age 5.

“It’s difficult for parents to recognize asthma in a young child because the symptoms can seem like those of a cold or other virus,” said Dr. Winder. “We want to alert parents to the warning signs of asthma and encourage them to seek treatment from an allergist if their child experiences these symptoms.”

During a screening, adults complete a 20-question *Life Quality (LQ) Test* developed by ACAAI for the program. Children under age 15 take a special test called the *Kids’ Asthma Check* that allows them to answer questions themselves about any breathing problems. Another version of the *Check* is available for parents of children up to 8 years of age to complete on their child’s behalf.

Participants also take a lung function test that involves blowing into a tube, and meeting with an allergist to determine if they should seek a thorough examination and diagnosis.

For a list of asthma screening locations and dates or to take online versions of the *LQ Test* and *Kids’ Asthma Check*, visit the ACAAI Web site at <http://www.acaai.org>.

Co-sponsoring the Nationwide Asthma Screening Program are two patient support organizations: the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of American and the Allergy and Asthma Network Mothers of Asthmatics.