

Key messages

This report highlights a number of key messages in relation to asthma in Australia. It also includes a focus chapter on chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and its relationship to asthma.

Asthma

Key messages relating to asthma:

- Asthma affects one in ten children and adults. This is equivalent to over 2 million Australians.
- Over the last decade, the prevalence of asthma has decreased among children and young adults.
- People with asthma are more likely to smoke than other people, particularly young adult females.
- 411 people died from asthma in 2009.
- People with asthma report worse health and a poorer quality of life than other people.
- People with asthma should have a written asthma action plan but most still don't.
- One in twelve children with asthma are exposed to tobacco smoke in their home.
- There was a decrease in deaths from asthma since the early 1990s. However, the Australian death rate is still high on an international scale.

Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease

Key messages relating to COPD:

- Among people aged 55 years and over:
 - deaths from COPD decreased by 65% between 1997 and 2007
 - those with COPD are twice as likely to smoke as other people
 - Indigenous Australians are more likely to be hospitalised for COPD compared with other Australians.
- There is a lack of pulmonary rehabilitation programs for people with COPD, despite evidence that these programs are effective.
- There is no national register of provision of long-term oxygen therapy.