

July

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

5	6	7
12	13	14
19	20	21
26	27	28

July

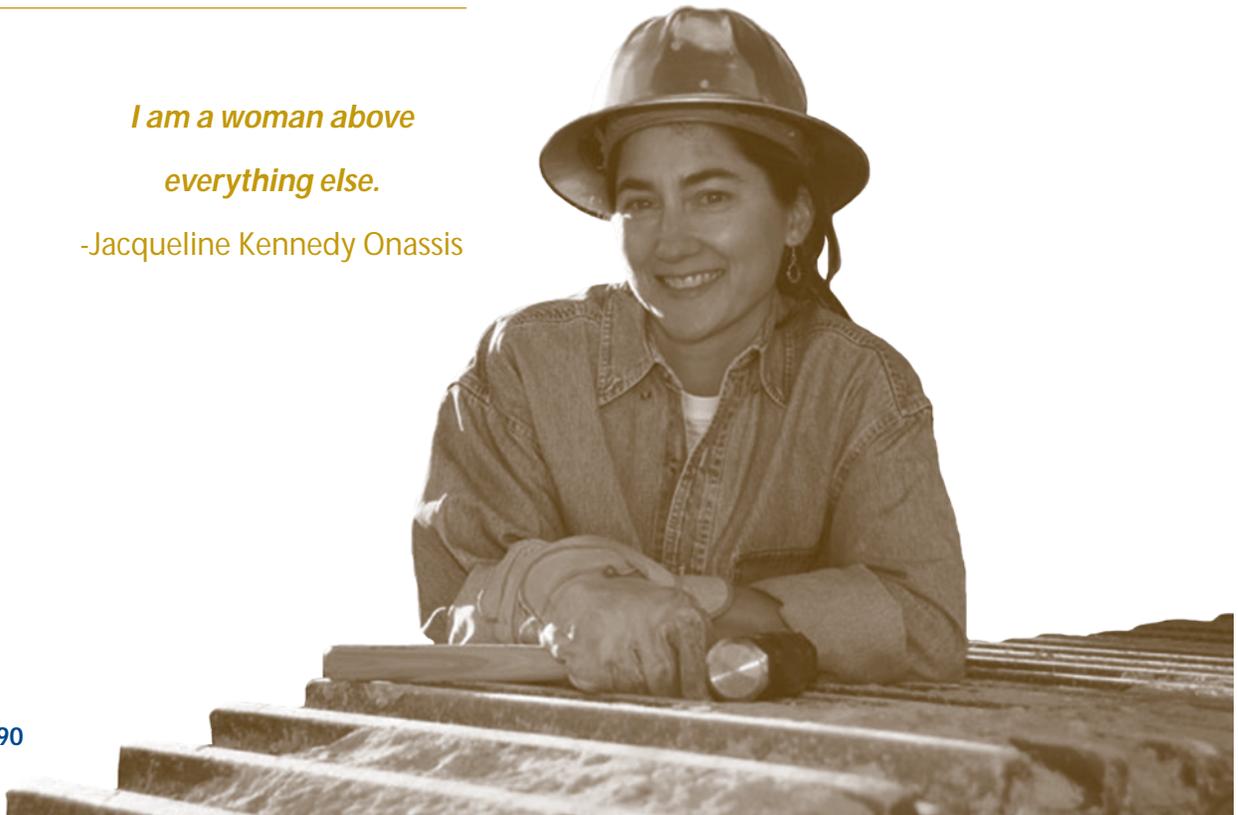
Health Activities and Observances

NOTES _____

Hemochromatosis Screening Awareness Month
Eye Injury Prevention Month
National Therapeutic Recreation Week (11-17)

*I am a woman above
everything else.*

-Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis



July

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
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5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

NOTES _____

Mon 5 _____

Tue 6 _____

Wed 7 _____

Thu 1 _____

Thu 8 _____

Fri 2 _____

Fri 9 _____

Sat 3 _____

Sat 10 _____

Sun 4 _____

Sun 11 _____

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
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26	27	28	29	30	31	

July

Mon 12 _____ Mon 19 _____

Tue 13 _____ Tue 20 _____

Wed 14 _____ Wed 21 _____

Thu 15 _____ Thu 22 _____

Fri 16 _____ Fri 23 _____

Sat 17 _____ Sat 24 _____

Sun 18 _____ Sun 25 _____



Wellness starts with... Asthma Control



Asthma is a growing problem in America. Did you know that the number of people with asthma has more than doubled in the past 15 years? Asthma is the leading cause of work loss for all adults. Although asthma affects people of all ages, races, and ethnic groups, children, low-income and minority groups suffer the most. As women, we suffer more sickness and death from asthma than men. And the asthma death rate and the hospitalization rate for Blacks are three times the rates for Whites. Although there is no cure for asthma, the good news is that you *can* do and be everything you want in your life by taking steps every day to manage and control it.

What Is Asthma

Asthma is a disease of the lungs in which the lung airways react easily to certain triggers, like tobacco smoke or animal hair (see *Triggers of Asthma* below). The lung airways then become inflamed (swollen), get narrow, and make it hard to breathe. Left untreated and uncontrolled, inflammation may lead to permanent damage to your lungs.

Triggers of Asthma

These are the most common asthma triggers:

- **Allergens** (substances that trigger allergies, such as airborne pollens, molds, animal dander [dead skin flakes], house dust mite and cockroach droppings, and indoor molds). Allergic rhinitis, or “hay fever,” puts you at risk for getting asthma. If your asthma is triggered by
- **Irritants** (substances that inflame the nose and airways, such as tobacco smoke, wood smoke, chemicals in the air, vapors, dust, gases or fumes, perfumes, household cleaners, cooking fumes, paints or varnishes, coal dust, chalk dust, or talcum powder). Changing weather conditions, such as changes in temperature



and humidity, barometric pressure, or strong winds also can trigger asthma symptoms or make symptoms worse. Of all of these irritants, tobacco smoke can especially worsen asthma. Research shows that there are more cases of asthma in children who have mothers who smoke. If you have asthma, no one should smoke in your home.

- **Viral or sinus infections.** Because they irritate the airways, colds or viral pneumonia can trigger or worsen asthma, especially in young children. Sinus infections or sinusitis can trigger or worsen asthma because of excess drainage of mucus into the nose, throat, and bronchial tubes.
- **Exercise.** Strenuous physical activity also can trigger asthma attacks. Breathing through your mouth, exercising in cold, dry air, or doing strenuous activities for a long time can increase the chance of a condition called exercise-induced asthma (EIA).
- **Gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD)** (stomach acid flowing back up the esophagus). This condition affects almost 90 percent of asthma patients. Symptoms of GERD include severe or repeated heartburn, belching, night asthma, increased asthma symptoms after meals or exercise, or frequent coughing and hoarseness. Treatment for GERD also often helps asthma symptoms.
- **Medicines or foods.** Some adults with asthma may have an asthma attack as a result of taking medicines such as aspirin or other non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), and beta-blockers (for heart disease, high blood pressure, or migraine headaches). Up to 19 percent of adult patients with asthma are sensitive to aspirin or NSAIDs. If you have asthma, talk with your health care provider before taking any over-the-counter medicines. Sometimes asthma symptoms are triggered from eating certain foods or food additives

such as milk, eggs, peanuts, foods with sulfites (such as wine), soy, wheat, fish, and shellfish. If you or your child have asthma that is triggered by food or food additives, avoid them.

- **Anxiety.** Although anxiety and stress cannot bring on asthma or asthma symptoms alone, they can cause fatigue. Being very tired may increase asthma symptoms and bring on an attack. Getting enough rest, eating healthy, and being physically active on most days of the week can help you control your asthma and are important to your overall wellness.

Asthma Symptoms

You can have any of these symptoms:

- chest tightness
- wheezing
- shortness of breath
- a cough that never seems to go away or gets worse over time

Asthma is the most common serious chronic disease of childhood. **If you are a mother, watch your infant or child for these signs of asthma (children can have them without the other symptoms seen in adults):**

- a cough
- rapid or noisy breathing in and out
- chest congestion

Although asthma is many times thought of as a "childhood disease," you also can get it when you are older. Many older women are unaware of their symptoms and assume their problems breathing are due to many other things, like age, smoking, or heart trouble. **If you are an older woman and are having problems breathing, or have any of the symptoms listed above, see your health care provider right away.**

What Causes Asthma

No one has certain, clear answers about what causes asthma or why the problem has been getting worse. More research is needed to understand the large increase in asthma cases and the causes of the disease. The most likely reason is an interaction between environmental and genetic (runs in families) factors. You are more likely to get asthma if you and members of your family tend to have allergies. But genes alone can't be the reason for the increase in asthma cases. More work is needed to look at how genes and the environment are linked to cause asthma.

We know that being around indoor allergens and other people's tobacco smoke (second-hand

smoke) put you at risk for more severe asthma. People now spend more time indoors and are more exposed to these things. And some studies suggest that being around indoor allergens can cause you to first get asthma. For instance, being around house dust mites and second-hand smoke can cause younger children to get asthma. And if you smoke during pregnancy, your baby has a greater chance of getting asthma than if she or he was only exposed to tobacco smoke after birth.

There are other possible things that might affect whether you get asthma. One is having certain infections in early life. If your body's immune system fights these infections, it somehow might protect you against asthma. Another is being

Steps You Can Take to Control Asthma

There is no cure for asthma, so taking care of your disease must become part of your daily life. The good news is that there are several things you can do:

- Stay away from things that trigger your asthma and make it worse.
- Take your prescribed asthma medicines exactly as your health care provider tells you to. You may be given medicines that open your airways and treat inflammation. Types of asthma medicines include bronchodilators (to prevent asthma attacks and to stop attacks after they have started) and anti-inflammatories (to help control airway inflammation and prevent attacks). Anti-leukotrienes are oral medicines used to treat chronic asthma by fighting the inflammatory response to allergens. If you are given medicine you must inhale, ask your health care provider if you are doing it right. Be sure to tell your health care provider about any other medicines that you take.
- Watch for things that make your asthma worse and act quickly. You can develop an "action plan" with your health care provider so you know when your asthma is getting worse and when to take your medicines.
- See your health care provider at least every six months to monitor your symptoms and your treatment plan.
- If you are pregnant, manage your symptoms to prevent an attack. Asthma tends to worsen in the late second and early third trimesters, but some women may have fewer symptoms during the last four weeks of pregnancy. Uncontrolled asthma in pregnancy can cause a decrease in oxygen in your and your baby's blood, which can threaten your baby's growth and survival! Besides taking your medicines and avoiding triggers, you can get a flu shot after the first three months of pregnancy, and exercise only moderately, under the supervision of your health care provider.

obese as an adolescent and as an adult. Also, your diet during pregnancy and your baby's diet in early infancy might affect whether your child gets asthma. Research shows that babies of mothers who breastfeed are less likely to develop asthma.

Workplace asthma has become the most common work-related lung disease. If you already have asthma, workplace exposures can make your disease worse. Many things in the workplace can cause asthma, including wood dusts, dyes, formaldehyde, metals, and latex. Many people suffer from asthma symptoms even after they are no longer around the exposures in their jobs.

If you suspect you are having work-related asthma problems, see your health care provider right away! Finding out early that you have asthma—as soon as you start having symptoms—and staying away from the things that are causing it, can increase your chances of getting better.



For more information on asthma, check out the following resources:

**National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute
National Asthma Education and Prevention
Program**

Internet: www.nhlbi.nih.gov/about/naepp
Phone: 301-592-8573

**National Institute of Allergy and Infectious
Diseases**

Internet: www.niaid.nih.gov/publications/asthma.htm

National Asthma Control Program

National Center for Environmental Health, CDC
Internet: www.cdc.gov/nceh/airpollution/asthma/default.htm

American Lung Association

Internet: www.lungusa.org
Phone: 212-315-8700

Publications:

Your Asthma Can Be Controlled: Expect Nothing Less

Internet: www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/lung/asthma/asthma.htm

Living With Asthma: Special Concerns for Older Adults

Internet: www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/lung/asthma/asth_ap.htm