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# Business & health

ADDRESSING PUBLIC HEALTH IN THE WORKPLACE

## Allergies and Asthma in the Workplace

Millions of people suffer from allergies caused by every day exposures to agents such as dust mites, pet dander, and pollens. Agents encountered by workers can also cause allergic problems such as asthma, nasal and sinus allergies, hives, and even severe anaphylactic reactions. Examples of these work-related agents include animal proteins, enzymes, flour, natural rubber latex, and certain reactive chemicals.

Asthma is a disease that affects your lungs. It is the most common long-term disease of children, but adults have asthma, too. Asthma causes repeated episodes of wheezing, breathlessness, chest tightness, and nighttime or early morning coughing. If you have asthma, you have it all the time, but you will have asthma attacks only when something bothers your lungs.

In most cases, the cause for asthma cannot be determined. Asthma can be controlled by knowing the warning signs of an attack, staying away from things that trigger an attack, and

following the advice of your health-care provider. When asthma is controlled, symptoms like wheezing or coughing, should disappear. Asthmatics should also sleep better and not miss work or school as often.

It is important to be aware of asthma triggers such as:

- Environmental Tobacco Smoke (Secondhand Smoke)
- Dust Mites
- Outdoor Air Pollution
- Cockroach Allergen
- Pets
- Mold
- Other Triggers (strenuous physical exercise; some medicines; bad weather such as thunderstorms, high humidity, or freezing temperatures; and some foods and food additives)

Learn what triggers your attacks so that you can avoid the triggers whenever possible and be alert for a possible attack when the triggers cannot be avoided.



*Information obtained from the CDC at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov).*

For more information on allergies in the workplace, please visit [www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/asthma/](http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/asthma/).

# SMOKING CESSATION



Freedom from Smoking is a stop smoking course lasting 9 weeks. The classes will teach step-by-step methods for quitting and making behavior changes. The first session focuses on getting ready to quit and setting an actual quit date. Additional classes focus on quitting with winning strategies, stress management, weight control, and relapse prevention.

Tuesday, April 14th from 5:30-6:30 at the Truman Memorial Building

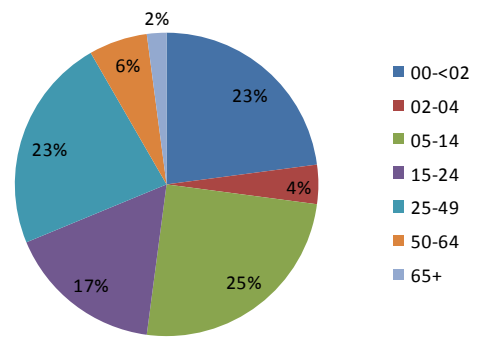
If you or your employees want to quit smoking contact the Independence Health Department at 816-325-7185.

# FLU SEASON UPDATE

Research has shown that:

- for every child with flu, 3 work days are lost by parents.
- every 1% increase in child population influenza brought 4% increase in adult Emergency Department visits.
- school aged children are first sickened by influenza.
- 3 to 4 year olds are the most significant predictors of adult illness rates and timing of onset.

## Independence Influenza Season by Age Groups; 2008-2009



Updated 3/24/2009

INDEPENDENCE  
**HEALTH**



DEPARTMENT

**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

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