

# “Bad Air” Increases Health Risks For Millions Of Asthma Patients Ⓜ

(NAPSA)—Nearly half of the U.S. population lives in areas with unhealthy ozone levels, according to a 2006 report.<sup>1</sup> And for people with respiratory and lung diseases, especially the estimated 20 million Americans with asthma,<sup>2</sup> “bad air” days pose an exceptionally high risk. Unfortunately, the health risks associated with high levels of ozone aren’t limited to summer months, and people can feel the effects of smog all year long.

## Ozone and Asthma

“Over the last decade, ozone levels have increased for many reasons, including higher temperatures and humidity,” says John D. Cox, author of “Weather for Dummies.” “Despite this, people are still unaware that ozone is dangerous even at its lowest levels.”

When inhaled, ozone can irritate lung airways and cause inflammation, and exposure to elevated levels of ozone can also increase the need for medical treatment and hospitalization in people with asthma.<sup>3</sup> People who are active, and people with asthma and other respiratory problems are at a higher risk on these days.

Asthma is a chronic disease causing inflammation to the lung’s airways and tightening of the muscles surrounding the lung’s airways. Together this causes the airways to narrow and can cause symptoms such as coughing, wheezing, shortness of breath and tightening of the chest cavity.



“With increasing ozone levels and the extreme heat during the summer, I saw twice as many asthma patients this year,” says Dr. Eric J. Schenkel, asthma expert and director of the Valley Clinical Research Center in Easton, Pa. “It’s important for people with asthma to know that the risk of high ozone levels doesn’t go away after the summer. Asthma patients should continue to take their maintenance treatment regularly. If your asthma is under control, then you’re less likely to experience symptoms because of asthma triggers like ozone.”

## Asthma Advice

“Asthma affects people differently so I encourage everyone to talk to a health care provider,” Schenkel says. “By monitoring the frequency and severity of a patient’s symptoms, physicians help ensure patients are on appropriate therapy. I’ve found that I’m

able to control many of my patient’s symptoms with a single-ingredient inhaled corticosteroid along with occasional use of a rescue inhaler.”

According to accepted asthma guidelines, inhaled corticosteroids (ICS), which reduce airway inflammation, are the recommended first-line maintenance treatment for mild to moderate persistent asthma. ASMANEX® TWISTHALER® 220 mcg (mometasone furoate inhalation powder) is the most recent ICS available.

“Work with your doctor and stick to the asthma therapy plan that is right for you,” adds Schenkel.

To ensure your asthma doesn’t keep you from enjoying the outdoors, take the following precautions:

- Monitor your local weather forecast for ozone alerts
- Limit time spent outdoors when Orange, Red and Purple ozone alerts are issued
- Turn on the air conditioning in your home and car to help control humidity
- Limit outdoor activities to the early morning when ozone levels are lowest

If you suffer from asthma, plan ahead and be alert to the conditions around you, advises Cox. You can help prevent asthma symptoms from interfering with your daily activities. For more asthma information, visit [www.asmanex.com](http://www.asmanex.com).

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ASMANEX TWISTHALER 220 mcg (mometasone furoate inhalation powder) is for the maintenance treatment of asthma as prophylactic therapy in patients 12 years of age and older. ASMANEX TWISTHALER is also for asthma patients who are taking oral steroids where it may reduce or eliminate the need for oral steroids. ASMANEX TWISTHALER will NOT relieve sudden asthma symptoms. The most common side effects with ASMANEX TWISTHALER include headache, allergic rhinitis, sore throat, and upper respiratory infection. ASMANEX TWISTHALER therapy should not be used to treat acute asthma episodes where extra measures are required. Be careful while adjusting to a switch from an oral steroid to the inhaled steroid ASMANEX TWISTHALER 220 mcg (mometasone furoate inhalation powder), as you may be less able to heal after surgery, infection or serious injury. Use ASMANEX as directed by your health care provider, since its ability to work in your lungs depends on regular use. If your asthma symptoms do not improve, or seem worse, contact your health care provider. Avoid coming into contact with the measles or chickenpox virus. Contact your health care provider immediately if you are exposed. If you are at an increased risk for decreased bone mineral density, the use of corticosteroids may increase your risk. Your health care provider should monitor your condition and, if needed, provide treatment. Long-term use of inhaled corticosteroids, such as ASMANEX, may increase the risk of some eye problems such as cataracts or glaucoma. For additional important product information, visit [www.asmanex.com](http://www.asmanex.com).

Eligible patients who are having difficulty affording Schering-Plough medications can call the S-P Cares patient assistance program at 1-(800) 656-9485 to see if they qualify for assistance. Or visit [www.pparx.org](http://www.pparx.org) for additional information.

## References

1. “State of the Air 2006” American Lung Association. < [http://www.lungusa2.org/embargo/sota06/SOTA06\\_Final.pdf](http://www.lungusa2.org/embargo/sota06/SOTA06_Final.pdf)>.
2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Health Interview Survey, 2002.
3. “Ozone Fact Sheet” American Lung Association. < <http://www.lungusa.org/site/pp.asp?c=dvLUK900E&b=50328>>.