

# Teens, keep breathing!

**HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF  
FROM ASTHMA.**



## **What is asthma?**

- Asthma is a disease that makes it difficult for people to breathe. It can be genetic or caused by environmental factors.
- People with asthma often experience difficulty exercising, chest pain, shortness of breath, and trouble sleeping. Asthma can worsen the symptoms of existing allergies.

## **Why be concerned?**

- Asthma is not just genetic, it can be caused by environmental factors. It is not uncommon for someone to develop asthma later in life.
- People who smoke or vape are much more likely to develop asthma than those who do not.
- Common environmental issues like air pollution can be worse because irritants in the air can affect airways and cause infections.

## **Data**

- In Washington state, the use of e-cigs from 2016 to 2017 for people of ages 18-24 was from 9.2 to 12.4%. This is higher than all other age groups.
- Living near near roadways with heavy traffic can cause asthma or make it worse. The majority of people living in the greater Seattle area live near heavy traffic roadways.
- Overall air quality in Washington state is good, between levels of 0-50 Air Quality Index. This is likely to decline as use of unclean energy and environmental damage continues.