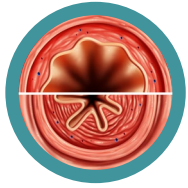


Asthma & Oral Health



normal
airway
asthma
airway

Asthma is a serious chronic disease that is caused by swelling and tightening in the airways. It can be controlled with a combination of medications and avoiding things that trigger asthma symptoms. Acid reflux can both trigger asthma and cause dental issues.



- Asthma affects over 1 million Michigan residents – 1 in 9 adults and 1 in 13 children. Adults with asthma are at much higher risk for tooth loss than those without asthma. More than half of U.S. kids age ≤5 had no preventative dental care in the last year.
- Black adult Michiganders are much more likely to have asthma (1 in 6) and be hospitalized for it. Almost half of Black adults in the U.S. received no preventative dental care in the last year.



Possible asthma triggers in a dental setting can include

- prophylaxis paste
- acrylic dust
- acrylic liquid
- sealants
- rubber dams
- tooth enamel dust
- dental anxiety – note on medical history form



People with asthma may breathe through their mouths due to

- nasal allergies
- tightened airways
- medications (e.g. corticosteroids or stomach acid reducers)



.... can cause

- more calculus, caries
- oral candidiasis
- enamel defects
- increased gingivitis and periodontal disease risk

What You Can Do

Before the patient's appointment



Be sure known asthma symptoms and triggers are listed on the medical history form. Identify patients with asthma by earmarking their charts. Make a text message reminder that asks them to bring the following to their dental visits:

- quick-relief inhaler (with spacer if needed)
- a list of all medications, including their daily control inhaler(s)
- EpiPen® (if prescribed)

During a dental visit



- Ask patient about their asthma, maintenance medication(s) and triggers and update their medical history form. Place EpiPen® and quick-relief inhaler on dental tray for easy access.
- Recommend rinsing with water thoroughly after using inhalers and stress the importance of frequent water intake.
- Avoid recommending aspirin, other salicylates and NSAIDs as they trigger asthma in some people. Recommend acetaminophen instead.
- Address fears and anxieties as needed, focus on patient breathing regularly and slowly during procedures. Offer frequent breaks, relaxation ball and music.



For references, and to learn more about asthma, visit Michigan.gov/asthmacontrol