

# Reducing 2.1 million emergency room visits, one count at a time

November 8 2013

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Asthma is the most common chronic illness and is responsible for 2.1 million emergency room visits annually. But according to a study being presented at the Annual Scientific Meeting of the American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology (ACAAI), these costly visits can be reduced by 55 percent when inhalers contain a simple dose counter.

Dose counters on rescue inhalers display the amount of medication remaining in the device, but are not standard for all meter dose inhalers.

"The study reports asthma related [emergency room visits](#) are estimated to be 55 percent lower in people with asthma who use dose counting inhalers than in those who use inhalers without dose counters," said allergist Allen Meadows, MD, ACAAI fellow and chair of the Public Education Committee. "Dose counters help patients know if they are getting enough medication and warn if the inhaler is nearing empty, both of which can help reduce asthma attacks."

According to ACAAI, 26 million Americans have asthma, a number that is increasing every year. Asthma is responsible for 4,000 deaths and an economic cost of \$20.7 billion annually.

"While dose counters can help reduce the number of asthma related emergency department visits annually, this alone is not enough," said allergist Michael Foggs, M.D., ACAAI president-elect. "Research has shown that effective [asthma treatment](#) includes regular care by an allergist who can closely monitor the disease, help identify and avoid

asthma triggers, and develop an emergency plan for severe attacks."

Improved outcomes with a board-certified allergist include:

- 54 to 76 percent reduction in [emergency room](#) visits
- 60 to 89 percent reduction in hospitalizations
- 77 percent reduction in lost time from work or school

"Asthma is a serious disease that can have life-threatening consequences when not properly controlled," said Dr. Foggs. "Symptoms may seem to improve over the years, but asthma never goes away. An [asthma](#) attack can strike at any time, making this disease a silent killer."

Provided by American College of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology

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