

## Asthma Death Rate Reported Up 30%

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The nation's death rate from asthma has increased by more than 30 percent in seven years, and nearly 10 million Americans are now affected by the disease, Federal health officials say. A number of factors may have contributed to the increase, the Federal Centers for Disease Control said in a weekly report. They include exposure to infections and other bronchial constriction like the quality of the air. From 1980 to 1987, the death rate from asthma in the United States rose to 1.7 per 100,000 population from 1.3, according to the health agency. The number of asthma deaths rose to 4,360 in 1987 from 2,891 in 1980, the latest years for which statistical analysis is available. The death rate for asthma was consistently higher for blacks than for whites, the agency said. For blacks, the asthma fatality rate increased to 3.6 for each 100,000 from 2.5 while the fatality rate for whites increased to 1.5 from 1.1. Death rates were higher for people 65 and older, who had the highest rate of asthma deaths, 7.9 for each 100,000 in 1987. More Americans are now suffering from the chronic disease, characterized by difficulty in breathing. An estimated 9.6 million people in the United States were affected by asthma in 1987, as against 6.8 million in 1980, the Atlanta-based agency said. The nation's asthma rate increased to 40.1 cases for 1,000 people from 31.2. "To reduce morbidity associated with asthma, health care personnel and public health officials must promote timely and aggressive medical treatment," the centers said.