

Tracks FAQs

How Can I Tell If Asthma Hospitalization Rates In My Area Are Changing Over Time?

[Announcer] This podcast is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. CDC—safer, healthier people.

[Desiree Robinson] Hello everyone. Thank you for tuning in to the Tracks FAQs Podcast, where we explore topics about CDC's National Environmental Public Health Tracking Network. In this podcast series, CDC scientists address frequently asked questions about the National Tracking Network, including using and applying data, running queries, and much more. Epidemiologist Heather Strosnider joins us to answer one of our top questions. Thanks for joining us.

[Heather Strosnider] Thank you.

[Desiree Robinson] Heather, one common question we get is...*How can I tell if asthma hospitalization rates in my area are changing over time?*

[Heather Strosnider] To find information on asthma hospitalization rates, select “asthma” from the query page as your content area. Then select “hospitalizations” as your indicator. The Tracking Network offers three measures of asthma hospitalizations, including age-adjusted rate, crude rate, and number of hospitalizations. The best measure over time is the age-adjusted rate. The rate recognizes that levels of asthma vary among different age groups. It has been statistically modified to decrease the effects of age on the data. After selecting the measure you want to use, choose the locations to compare and then select the time period. To compare the rates for different time periods, select the timeframes you are interested in and run the query.

You can view the results as a map, or table, or graph. A graph will provide a visual display of any increases or decreases of asthma hospitalization rates in your area. This data can be used in a number of ways. We recently learned that one Tracking Network partner joined forces with a state asthma coalition to aid in local outreach efforts. The partner and the coalition used data from the Tracking Network to identify specific counties that had an increase in the number of asthma-related hospital visits. They worked together to ensure that programs were in place to help people in those counties manage their asthma better.

[Desiree Robinson] I would like to thank CDC Epidemiologist Heather Strosnider for joining us for this episode of Tracks FAQs. Thank you, Heather. That's all for this episode of Tracks FAQs. To submit a question for a CDC Tracking expert to address in this series, please e-mail trackingsupport@cdc.gov.

[Announcer] For the most accurate health information, visit www.cdc.gov or call 1-800-CDC-INFO 24/7.