Wisconsin influenza vaccination rates among people with asthma are higher than among the general population, but are still lower than recommended.

Children and adults with asthma are at high risk of severe disease and complications from influenza. Therefore, all people with asthma 6 months of age and older are recommended to receive influenza vaccine every year. During 2014, young adults with asthma were less likely than older adults with asthma to report receiving influenza vaccine. Influenza vaccination rates among persistent* asthmatics residing in Wisconsin during the 2013–2014 influenza season were higher than among the general public, but were still suboptimal. To protect all asthmatics from influenza, strategies are needed to identify and overcome barriers to influenza vaccination in Wisconsin.

Among Wisconsin adults with current asthma who participated in the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) survey, 36% reported receiving influenza vaccine during 2014. Older adults with asthma were more likely to be vaccinated than younger adults with asthma (Figure 1). In addition, black adults and males with asthma were less likely to report influenza vaccination, but these differences were not statistically significant.

![Figure 1. Influenza vaccination rates among adults with current asthma by age, sex, and race, Wisconsin, 2014](image)

**Older adults with asthma were more likely to be vaccinated than younger adults with asthma.**

**Black adults and males with asthma were less likely to be vaccinated, but the differences were not significant.**

*Persistent asthma was defined using criteria from the Healthcare Effectiveness Data and Information Set (HEDIS), developed by the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) and includes persons who met at least one of the following criteria: (a) at least four asthma medication filled prescriptions, or (b) at least one emergency department visit with a primary diagnosis of asthma, or (c) at least one hospital inpatient visit with a primary diagnosis of asthma, or (d) at least four outpatient visits with asthma listed as one of the diagnoses and at least two asthma medication filled prescriptions. National Committee for Quality Assurance. HEDIS 2015 Volume 2: Technical Specifications for Health Plans. Washington, DC: National Committee for Quality Assurance, 2014
Among children and adults with persistent asthma insured by Wisconsin Medicaid and with available vaccination histories in the Wisconsin Immunization Registry (WIR), 44% received influenza vaccine during the 2013–2014 influenza season. Similarly, among people with persistent asthma insured by private insurance companies that submit insurance claims data to the Wisconsin Health Information Organization, 38% had an insurance claim for influenza vaccination during the 2013–2014 influenza season.

Figure 2 displays influenza vaccination rates among people with persistent asthma insured by Medicaid compared to the general public, by age group. Vaccination rates were highest among those aged 2–4 years and 50–64 years. Influenza vaccination rates among persistent asthmatics insured by Medicaid were higher than among the general population; however, vaccination rates in all groups were suboptimal and in need of improvement.

Figure 2. Influenza vaccination rates among persistent asthmatics insured by Medicaid and among the general public, by age group, Wisconsin, 2013–2014 influenza season

Data Source: Wisconsin Immunization Registry and Wisconsin Medicaid

Vaccination rates were highest among the youngest and oldest age groups. Persistent asthmatics insured by Medicaid had higher vaccination rates than the general population, but all influenza vaccination rates should be higher.