

Breathe Free this World Asthma Day

World Asthma Day is being celebrated today, 6 May 2014. According to a report by the Global Initiative for Asthma (GINA), South Africa has the world's fourth highest asthma death rate among five to 35 year olds. To address this problem, Cipla is running a sustainable asthma education initiative, Breathe Free.



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The Breathe Free initiative, which follows the asthma treatment guidelines as set out by GINA and other reputable bodies, will serve to educate South Africans on this condition which affects more than 300 million people worldwide. Breathe Free clinics are accessible at healthcare facilities and pharmacies nationwide.

As such, to bring awareness on World Asthma Day, Cipla is hosting free lung function screening tests as well as correct asthma device technique training at various pharmacies across the country. Patients will be taught how to recognise asthma symptoms, be provided with critical information on how best to monitor and control their condition, as well as to identify when to consult their treating doctor. For more on the Cipla Breathe Free initiative, please visit www.breathefree.co.za.

Asthma in SA

Of the estimated 4.2 million South Africans with asthma, 1.5% die of this condition annually. The disease is characterised by varying degrees of severity of airflow limitation and chronic inflammation of the lungs. Symptoms include wheezing, coughing, tightness in the chest and shortness of breath.

"Asthma prevalence in southern Africa is higher than any other area on the continent, with more than 20% of school children across the region suffering from this condition. In South Africa asthma is the third most common cause of hospital admissions of children, yet only 2% of asthmatics receive treatment," says Dr Shanaugh Emmanuel, a general practitioner with a special focus on asthma diagnosis and treatment.

"The burden of this disease on governments, healthcare systems and families is increasing worldwide, especially in South Africa. Yet, people with asthma can lead normal lives today without having to compromise their lifestyle. This campaign aims to educate and show individuals and families facing this problem that this is possible," explains Emmanuel.