



Simple Steps To An Asthma Friendly Home

A Checklist To Help Clear Your Home of Asthma Triggers

Allergies and irritants can make asthma symptoms more severe, but many things can be done in your home to reduce these asthma triggers and help reduce asthma symptoms. This checklist helps point out common allergens/triggers that are often present in homes. Not everyone is sensitive to all of them, but addressing these triggers can greatly improve your health.

These tips to reduce asthma triggers in the home listed here are recommendations that are included in the National Asthma Education and Prevention Program's (NAEPP) *Expert Panel Report 3: Guidelines for the Diagnosis and Management of Asthma* and include other useful recommendations by EPA and the National Academy of Sciences. It is important to realize that individual steps alone to reduce asthma triggers are generally ineffective. Addressing as many asthma triggers in the home as possible, in addition to following an asthma action plan, is the best approach to controlling your asthma symptoms. Speak to your health care provider to establish an asthma action plan for your family, as well as to get more information.

Second-Hand Smoke and Outdoor Environments

- Avoid exposure to cigarette smoke and smoke from wood-burning stoves and fireplaces.
- Choose not to smoke in your home or car, and don't allow others to do so either. Take the pledge to make your home smoke-free.
- Check EPA's Air Quality Index (AQI) at www.airnow.gov to learn about your local air quality and reduce outdoor activities when the AQI reports unhealthy levels.

Warm-Blooded Pets (such as cats, dogs, hamsters and birds)

- Consider keeping pets outdoors or finding a new home for your pets because pet skin flakes, urine, and saliva can be asthma triggers for many people.
- Keep pets out of the bedroom and keep the bedroom door closed.
- Keep pets away from fabric-covered furniture, carpets, and stuffed toys.

Dust Mites

- Use an allergen-impermeable cover over your mattress and pillows (and then put a sheet/pillow case over it).
- Choose washable bedding; wash the sheets and blankets weekly in hot water, and dry completely.
- Cover upholstered furniture with washable slipcovers or sheets, and wash them regularly in hot water, and dry completely.
- Minimize the number of stuffed toys on the child's bed or in the bedroom, and wash them regularly in hot water, and dry completely.
- Vacuum carpets and fabric-covered furniture, when the asthmatic is away, once or twice a week to reduce house dust, using a HEPA filter vacuum if possible.
- Avoid sleeping or lying on upholstered furniture.
- Remove carpets from bedroom.

Mold

- Fix all leaks as soon as possible, since they may become moldy in a few days time.
- Clean moldy surfaces by scrubbing with soap and water and dry completely. Wearing a face-mask when cleaning is suggested.
- After removing the mold and fixing leaks, replace damaged ceiling tiles and carpet.
- Keep drip pans in your air conditioner, refrigerator, and dehumidifier clean and dry. Avoid standing water in plant containers.
- Use of humidifiers and evaporative coolers is not generally recommended because they encourage the growth of both mold and house-dust mites. If it is used to avoid excessive dryness, the relative humidity should be maintained at or below 60 percent, ideally between 30 and 50 percent.
- If possible, use air conditioning to reduce outdoor allergens from getting inside the house and to control mold and house-dust mites. Change air conditioning filters regularly.
- Vent exhaust fans and clothes dryers outside of the house.

Pests (such as cockroaches and rodents)

- Reduce use of pesticides—use Integrated Pest Management (IPM) best practices instead.
- Do not leave standing water, food or garbage exposed. Store food in airtight containers. Clean all food crumbs or spilled liquids right away.
- Seal holes or gaps between construction materials and pipes.
- Use low toxic pesticides (poison baits, boric acid, or traps) before using pesticide sprays or fogging.
- If using chemical agents, home should be well ventilated (ie, windows open). If using sprays, limit the spray to the infested area, and carefully follow instructions on the label.

Irritants

- Don't use gas stoves for heating because the fumes can be an asthma trigger. Make sure pilot burners have a blue flame.
- Review the cleaners you use for strong odors and reduce their use.
- Minimize the use of fragrances, air fresheners or candles to reduce strong odors.
- People with asthma should not be in the home if chemical agents are used, and should not return until the odor has gone away. They should stay out of rooms where a vacuum cleaner is being or has just been used.

For more helpful tips or to get more information, contact your health care provider or go to the following websites:

www.noattacks.org or www.epa.gov/iaq/asthma/index.html

Sources:

- National Asthma Education And Prevention Program (NAEPP) *Expert Panel Report 3: Guidelines for the Diagnosis and Management of Asthma*
- Institute Of Medicine (US). [Clearing the Air : Asthma and Indoor Air Exposures](#). Washington, DC: National Academy Press, 2000.
- EPA's *Clearing the Air of Asthma Triggers – 10 Steps to Making Your Home Asthma-Friendly*
- EPA's *Clear Your Home of Asthma Triggers*.
- EPA's *Asthma Home Environment Checklist*