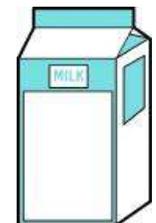




Asthma Triggers



1. Dust Mites and Dust Control
2. Rodents and Roaches
3. Pets and Asthma
4. Environmental Tobacco Smoke
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What are triggers?

Triggers are things that may bother the airways, making it hard to breathe or cause asthma signs or symptoms. Avoid your triggers whenever possible. Triggers can be different from person to person. Allergy testing can help you know what some of your triggers are.

Triggers may include:

- Cigarette smoke
- Pollution
- Strong odors
- Cold, flu or sinus infections
- Behavior: Exercise, laughing, crying
- Changes in weather, hot or cold weather
- Allergies to:
 - Pets
 - Mold
 - Dust
 - Cockroaches
 - Rodents
 - Certain foods, medicines





Dust Mites



How do they affect asthma?

- Dust mites and their droppings build up on sheets, blankets, mattress, pillows, stuffed toys, furniture and rugs
- They are part of the house dust and are a normal part of life - every house has them
- Their droppings can contribute to your asthma

What can I do?

- Wash bedding at least every 2 weeks in hot water
- Get rid of carpets and large rugs
- Use special allergen proof covers for pillow, mattress and box springs
- Remove shoes at the door
- Wash and dry stuffed animals or place in freezer overnight every week
- Vacuum weekly

Rodents and Roaches

How do they affect asthma?



- Roach and mouse saliva, eggs, droppings, secretions, skin and their bodies can trigger asthma
- Roaches and mice like wet and warm places and live in groups
- Roaches and mice are attracted to water, food, shelter and warmth



What can I do?

- Use baits and traps
- Clean up food spills, and crumbs quickly
- Avoid eating in different rooms
- Take out trash every night
- Vacuum regularly
- Store food in sealed containers
- Clean up dishes after use, or put in dishwasher after rinsing
- Put lid on trash can
- Contact landlord to repair large gaps, holes in walls, leaky pipes, faucets, etc.

Pets

How do they affect asthma?

- Animal dander is dead skin cells from animals
- People with asthma are allergic to dander, saliva or urine from furry or feathered pets
- Dander sticks to clothes and hands



What can I do?

- Give away furry or feathered pet if you can
- Choose pets without fur or feathers
- Do not allow furry or feathered pets in the bedroom
- Wash hands and change clothes after touching a pet or being in a house with a pet
- Bathe the pet every week
- Vacuum and clean pet sleeping and play areas often

Environmental Tobacco Smoke

How does it affect asthma?

- Smoke that smokers breathe out is called “secondhand smoke”
- If you breathe secondhand smoke, it can cause health problems, such as asthma
- The smoke irritates your lungs, and can increase your risk for asthma



What can I do?

- Do not smoke in your home or car
- Do not smoke in the presence of your children
- Use a “smoking jacket” to smoke outside; remove the jacket before coming into the house
- Do not let anyone else smoke in the presence of your children
- Stop smoking

Moisture / Mold

How do they affect asthma?

- Too much moisture in your home can increase dust mites, mold and roaches
- This will increase your risk for asthma
- Moisture can come from plumbing leaks, poor air circulation, flooding, sewer backups, etc.
- The key to preventing mold is to reduce moisture!



What can I do to prevent mold?

- Scour sinks and tubs every 2 weeks
- Clean garbage cans frequently
- Use exhaust fans or open windows in the kitchen and bathroom (if no fan, keep door open after showering)
- Clean up and fix leaks within 24 hours, call landlord if needed
- Circulate fresh air in your home, let stale air out
- Move furniture a few inches from the wall to let air circulate
- Dry condensation on surfaces

Exercise

How does it affect asthma?

- Exercise can trigger asthma attacks in some people, especially children
- Exercising is healthy, you do not need to stop this, but you can help prevent an asthma attack from happening.



What can I do?

- Talk to your doctor about taking albuterol 15-20 min before exercising
- Warm-up and cool-down
- Stop** if coughing, wheezing, shortness of breath or chest tightness occur
- Exercise indoors on high pollution, high pollen, very hot or cold/dry days
- Do less intensive exercise if you have recently had an asthma attack or are having mild symptoms
- Tell your coach/PE teacher about your child's asthma

Infections

How do they affect asthma?

- Any upper respiratory infections -- like a cold, the flu, or sinusitis -- can affect your lungs causing inflammation and airway narrowing



What can I do?

- Be aware of any asthma symptoms, even mild, so that you can contact your doctor and avoid a more serious asthma attack
- Wash hands frequently to avoid spreading germs
- Get a flu shot every year to prevent infections that can trigger asthma
- Keep breathing equipment clean
- Clean surfaces, door handles, etc. regularly to reduce the spread of germs

Pollen

How does it affect asthma?

- Pollen is the powder made by flowers, trees, grasses and weeds
- Pollen can trigger asthma symptoms in some people



What can I do?

- Track daily pollen counts on the news or radio
- Stay indoors during peak pollen times (5am – 10am) and on dry, windy days
- Close windows and use air conditioning in home and car on hot days if possible
- Avoid fresh cut grass
- Don't hang clothes out to dry
- Bathe each evening to wash pollen from your skin and hair
- Change clothes before getting into bed

Air Pollution

How does it affect asthma?

- Air pollution can make it harder to breathe and can cause coughing, wheezing, chest discomfort, and a burning feeling in the lungs
- Symptoms can begin up to a day **after** you have been in polluted air and can make you more sensitive to other triggers like mold or dust mites



What can I do?

- Track air pollution levels on the news or radio
- Stay indoors, close windows and use air conditioning in home and car on Code Red or Code Orange air quality days
- Stay indoors and exercise indoors during peak pollution times (often afternoons and evenings on hot summer days)
- Exercise away from busy roads or industrial areas

Household Products/Air Fresheners

How do they affect asthma?

- Airborne chemicals and smells can trigger asthma attacks
- This includes: paint, cooking fumes (especially when frying), cleaning supplies, smelly soaps and lotions, perfumes, hairspray, bleach, air fresheners, incense, scented candles, bug spray, etc.



What can I do?

- Avoid using chemical cleaners and instead use vinegar, baking soda, Borax, and hot water to clean
- Do not use perfumes, air fresheners, incense, bug spray or scented candles
- If using bleach or other chemicals, be sure to open windows to ventilate and use the chemicals when the person with asthma is not at home
- Use kitchen fan and/or open a window when cooking and cook only when asthmatic is not in the kitchen

Behavior and Stress

How do they affect asthma?

- Crying, laughing and stressful situations can trigger asthma attacks and need to be managed just like other triggers
- Stress increases inflammation in the body and lungs
- Parents' stress has been found to affect their asthma management efforts and their children's asthma symptoms



What can I do?

- Replace anxious thoughts with positive thoughts
- Figure out what your stressors are and try to resolve them

You and your child should:

- Exercise and eat a diet low in fat and sugar and rich in vegetables and fruits of a variety of colors
- Get enough sleep
- Recognize *early* asthma signs, avoid extreme reactions, and stay calm to help prevent a serious asthma attack

Food Allergies

How do they affect asthma?



- Foods can trigger asthma attacks in allergic individuals
- Common food allergies: sulfites (in dried fruit, wine), milk, eggs, nuts, fish, soy and wheat

What can I do?

- Get allergy tested to help identify food allergies
- Avoid foods that cause any negative physical reactions (be sure to read labels for “hidden” ingredients!)
- Get an Epi-Pen from your health care provider to use in case of an allergic reaction that makes it difficult to breathe

Diet



How does it affect asthma?

- Diets low in vitamins and high in fat have been associated with increased asthma symptoms and decreased response to asthma medications
- Obesity is a risk factor for asthma



What can I do?

- Eat a variety of different colors of fruits and vegetables every day
- Eat calcium-rich foods (or foods fortified with calcium) several times a day such as milk, yogurt and cheese
- Eat fish and low fat chicken, turkey and meat
- Limit fried foods and sugar