



# Asthma Trigger Control

You can help prevent asthma attacks by staying away from things that make your asthma worse. These are called **triggers**. Everyone's triggers are different. You do not need to do all the things in this guide. Focus on the triggers that are making your asthma worse.

## Tobacco Smoke

- ⇒ If you smoke, ask your doctor for ways to help you quit. Ask family members to quit smoking too.
- ⇒ Do not allow smoking in your home or around you.
- ⇒ Be sure no one smokes at a child's day care center

## Dust Mites

Dust mites are like tiny "bugs" you cannot see that live in cloth or carpet. Many people with asthma are allergic to dust mites.

- ⇒ Encase your mattress and pillow in a special dust-proof cover.
- ⇒ Wash sheets, blankets and dust proof covers in hot water (130°F) to kill the mites.
- ⇒ Reduce indoor humidity to less than 50%
- ⇒ Try not to sleep or lie on cloth-covered cushions or furniture.
- ⇒ Remove carpets from your bedroom and those laid on concrete, if you can.
- ⇒ Keep stuffed toys out of the bed or wash the toys weekly in hot water.

## Animal Dander

Some people are allergic to the flakes of skin or dried saliva from animals with fur or feathers.

### The best thing to do:

- ⇒ Keep furred or feathered pets out of your home.

### If you can't keep pets outdoors:

- ⇒ Keep the pet out of your bedroom and keep the bedroom door closed.
- ⇒ Cover the air vents in your bedroom with heavy material to filter the air.
- ⇒ Remove carpets and furniture covered with cloth from your home. If that is not possible, keep pets out of those rooms.

## Cockroach

Many people with asthma are allergic to the dried droppings and remains of cockroaches.

- ⇒ Keep all food out of your bedroom.
- ⇒ Keep food and garbage in closed containers (never leave food out).
- ⇒ Use poison baits, powders, gels or paste (for example, boric acid). Or use "hotels" as a trap for cockroaches.
- ⇒ If using a spray, stay out of the room until odor goes away.

## Vacuum Cleaning

- ⇒ Try to get someone else to vacuum for you once or twice a week, if you can. Stay out of rooms while they are being vacuumed and for a short while afterward.
- ⇒ If you vacuum, use a dust mask (from a hardware store), a double-layered or micro filter vacuum cleaner bag, or a vacuum cleaner with a HEPA filter.

## Indoor Mold

- ⇒ Fix leaky faucets, pipes, or other sources of water.
- ⇒ Clean moldy surfaces with a cleaner that has bleach in it.

## Pollen and Outdoor Mold

What to do during your allergy season (when pollen or mold spore counts are high):

- ⇒ Try to keep your windows closed.
- ⇒ Stay indoors with windows closed during the midday and afternoon, if you can. Pollen and some mold spore counts are highest at that time.
- ⇒ Ask your doctor whether you need to take or increase anti-inflammatory medicine before your allergy season starts.

Source: National Institute of Health

## Asthma Trigger Control continued

### Smoke, Strong Odors, and Sprays

- ⇒ If possible, do not use a wood-burning stove, kerosene heater, or fireplace.
- ⇒ Try to stay away from strong odors and sprays, such as perfume, talcum powder, hair spray, and paints.

### Exercise, Sports, Work, or Play

- ⇒ You should be able to be active without symptoms. See your doctor if you have asthma symptoms when you are active – like when you exercise, do sports, play, or work hard.
- ⇒ Ask your doctor about taking medicine before you exercise to prevent symptoms.
- ⇒ Warm up for about 6-10 minutes before you exercise.
- ⇒ Try not to work or play hard outside when the air pollution or pollen levels (if you are allergic to the pollen) are high.

### Other Things That can Make Asthma Worse

- ⇒ **Flu:** Get a flu shot
- ⇒ **Sulfites in foods:** Do not drink beer or wine or eat shrimp, dried fruit or processed potatoes if they cause asthma symptoms.
- ⇒ **Cold air:** Cover your nose and mouth with a scarf on cold or windy days.
- ⇒ **Other medicines:** Tell your doctor about all the medicines you may take. Include cold medicines, aspirin and even eye drops.

### Product Sources:

Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America  
800-727-8462

Allergy and Asthma Network/Mothers of Asthmatics, Inc.  
800-878-4403

American Academy of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology  
800-822-2762

National Jewish Medical and Research Center

Source: National Institute of Health