

## Avoiding and Controlling Asthma Triggers

There are many triggers around the home that can worsen asthma symptoms. Check your triggers, then decide which of the tips you will try. Use the “My Solutions” area to write down your own ideas and your personal plan for taking action.

### Asthma Trigger and Control Tips

### My Solutions

#### Smoking and Secondhand Smoke

- Make a plan to quit smoking! Get help by calling **1-800-LUNGUSA** or visiting [FreedomFromSmoking.org](http://FreedomFromSmoking.org).
- Ask others not to smoke near me.
- Do not allow anyone to smoke in my home, car or work area.
- Avoid the homes and cars of people who do allow smoking.
- Patronize smokefree businesses; or if smoking is allowed, eat or sit in nonsmoking areas.
- Avoid the designated smoking area at work.
- Support local efforts for making all public places smokefree. (Learn more at [Lung.org](http://Lung.org). Search for Lung Action Network.)

#### Wood Smoke and Fires

- Avoid burning wood indoors.
- Allow for airflow around fireplaces or vented appliances.
- Pay attention to air quality forecasts during wildfires and avoid going outside if air pollution levels are poor.

#### Outdoor Air Pollution

- Check the air quality index (AQI) forecast daily at [airnow.gov](http://airnow.gov). The color-coded system shows when pollution levels are unhealthy.
- Limit exercise/strenuous activities outdoors when the AQI is orange (unhealthy); and avoid outdoor activities when the AQI is red, purple or maroon.
- Always avoid exercising around high-traffic areas.

#### Dust and Dust Mites

- Cover my mattress, box spring and pillows in dust-proof, zippered cases.
- Wash all bedding (sheets, blankets, bedcovers) in hot water (130°F) weekly.
- Use washable area rugs in the bedroom instead of carpet.
- Wash curtains often.
- Maintain indoor humidity between 30 to 50 percent.
- Use air conditioner or dehumidifier to lower humidity in my bedroom and home (and clean humidifiers regularly).
- Dust (damp cloth) and vacuum twice a week. Use a vacuum with a HEPA filter or a central vacuum that vents outside.  
**NOTE: If you have a dust mite allergy, you should not vacuum yourself or be in a room that is being vacuumed.**
- Avoid upholstered furniture, especially in the bedroom.

## Asthma Trigger and Control Tips

## My Solutions



### Pets, Animal Dander

- Avoid animals with fur or feathers.
- Do not let pets inside my home.
- Keep the pet I have out of my bedroom.

### Mold and Mildew

- Keep my home well ventilated and free of dampness.
- Fix leaks right away.
- Clean mildew from tiles and shower curtains with detergent or soap.
- Use an exhaust fan or open a window to get rid of moisture in bathrooms and kitchens.
- Clean the water basins of air conditioners, humidifiers and refrigerators often.
- Limit the number of plants in my home and work area. (Mold likes soil.)
- Vent the clothes dryer to the outside.
- Alert management to mold problems at work.

### Pollen

- Do not keep fresh flowers with a lot of pollen inside my home or near my work area.
- Keep doors and windows closed during pollen season, especially during the day.
- Run my air conditioner unit one half-hour before I plan to use a room.
- After being outside for a long time, take a shower and change clothes when I come inside on high pollen and mold count days.
- Limit outdoor activities when pollen levels are high.

### Strong Odors (e.g., hairspray, air fresheners, cleaning products)

- Use unscented products.
- Ask those living or working around me not to use scented products.
- Avoid areas with strong smells when possible.
- Use a fan when I must be near a strong odor.
- Keeps smells from spreading by closing off areas where the odor is located.

## Asthma Trigger and Control Tips

## My Solutions



### Respiratory Infections

- Wash my hands frequently to prevent infections.
- Call my healthcare provider if I think I have a respiratory infection.
- Get a flu shot every year, and a pneumonia vaccine if age 65 or older or my healthcare provider advises it.

### Physical Activity/Exercise

- Start slowly, do a good warm up.
- Ask my healthcare provider about taking medicine before exercising or physical exertion at work.
- Take breaks as needed.

### Strong Emotions (e.g., stress, crying and even laughing)

- Practice good general health habits to reduce stress.
- Avoid stressful situations.
- Use relaxation exercises and techniques.
- Take advantage of work breaks and lunch hour.

### Cold Air/Extreme Heat

- Cover my mouth and nose with a scarf when outdoors.
- Avoid being outside when weather is too cold or too hot.



### Products That Help Asthma: Buyer Beware!

Lots of products claim to help asthma symptoms, but few live up to the hype. For instance, there is little scientific proof that air purifiers reduce triggers in the air. Some actually create ozone, a harmful lung irritant. And, humidifiers and vaporizers which are sometimes used to ease asthma symptoms, can actually increase triggers such as dust mites and mold if used improperly! Be sure to do your research and follow all instructions if you want to try one of these products.