

## Avoiding Additional Triggers and Problems

- Bathe before bedtime to wash pollen off skin and hair.
- Place clothing worn during the day in a hamper outside of the bedroom.
- Take an asthma treatment before exercise. Short-acting or rescue medicines will prevent exercise-induced breathing problems in most cases.
- Always warm up before exercising, such as walking for five minutes before intense exertion.
- Wear a scarf over the mouth to prevent cold weather induced symptoms.
- Get an annual flu vaccine to prevent against influenza, a serious respiratory infection.
- Get a pneumococcal vaccine to protect against pneumonia, a serious complication of the flu.



For more information about asthma, contact one of the following organizations:

American Lung Association  
1-800-LUNGUSA  
[www.lung.org](http://www.lung.org)

Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America  
1-800-7-ASTHMA  
[www.aafa.org](http://www.aafa.org)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
[www.cdc.gov/asthma/children.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/asthma/children.htm)

National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute  
1-301-592-8573  
[www.nhlbi.nih.gov](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov)

The above constitutes a sampling of organizations that provide information about asthma. Other organizations may be available in your area. We do not recommend or endorse any one organization.

This service is designed to provide you with general health education, information and support in making informed health care decisions. We do not diagnose, provide medical advice, or make treatment recommendations. Please see your benefit plan for a description of covered services. This service is not a substitute for medical care from your doctor. Always seek the advice of your physician or other qualified health care provider for any medical concerns or questions.

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# Asthma Triggers

## Identifying and Avoiding Them



# What Are Asthma Triggers?



Asthma triggers are certain allergens, smells, environmental factors and other stimuli that can cause an asthma attack.

You can help stop attacks before they start by knowing what triggers your child's asthma and taking steps to avoid these things.

Common asthma triggers include:

## Allergens

- Pet dander and bird feathers
- Pollens from grass, trees and weeds
- Airborne mold, mildew and spores
- Dust (household, coal and chalk) and dust mites
- Cockroach droppings
- Insect bites and stings
- Certain foods and additives, such as sulfates
- Certain medications

## Irritants

- Secondhand smoke from cigarettes and fireplaces
- Cold or dry air and changes in humidity
- Exhaust fumes
- Air pollution
- Strong odors and perfumes

## Household Products

- Paints and varnishes
- Aerosols and air fresheners
- Cleaning products

## Infections/Diseases

- Colds
- Flu
- Sinusitis
- Heartburn or acid reflux disease

## Other

- Exercise, especially outdoors in cold weather
- Anxiety
- Stress

## Avoiding Asthma Triggers

These simple precautions can help control your child's asthma and help your child avoid missed days at school, emergency room visits and hospital stays:

- Do not smoke, and avoid secondhand smoke from others who smoke, wood fires, fireplaces and burning leaves.
- Remove or reduce pet dander. Avoid pets with fur and feathers, and bathe and groom pets regularly.

- Dust-proof your home. Choose wooden floors and blinds instead of carpets and drapes, avoid stuffed furniture, and vacuum often.
- Do not clean carpets with a wet solution, because improper drying can cause mold to grow under the carpet.
- Use dust-proof covers on your pillows, mattresses and box springs. Wash bed linens with water heated to at least 130 degrees.
- Close doors and windows. Use air conditioners, especially during allergy seasons and air quality alerts, to keep pollen from getting into your house.
- Fix leaky plumbing to eliminate dampness that can cause mold, and wash moldy spots with bleach cleaner.
- Use a dehumidifier to maintain low humidity between 35 and 50 percent.
- Keep indoor air clean by maintaining and cleaning heating and cooling systems.
- Treat a cockroach problem with an extermination service. Put food away immediately.
- Be aware of weather conditions and plan activities appropriately. Stay inside on Air Quality Action Days.