

Environmental Asthma Triggers



Asthma Trigger	Found Where:	What You Can Do
Dust Mites	Pillows, bed linens, upholstered furniture, carpets, stuffed toys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use dust mite covers on pillows and bed • Wash bedding and dry in hot dryer weekly • Vacuum carpets and furniture with HEPA vacuum weekly • Limit number of stuffed animals and wash and dry in hot dryer or freeze in sealed bag weekly • Consider hardwood flooring • Avoid humidifiers
Cockroaches and Pests	Places in the home with food and water- kitchen, bathrooms especially; cardboard, cluttered areas like cupboards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Block any entry points (small spaces around doors, windows, corners) • Fix any leaks that may be providing water • Wipe counters and stoves daily • Store food in tightly sealed containers or bags • Do not leave dirty dishes out overnight • Do not store cardboard inside • Keep cupboards organized to reduce shelter for pests • Take out trash and recycling daily when dealing with an infestation • When necessary, use pesticide bait stations instead of sprays or bombs
Secondhand Smoke	Cigarettes, cigars, pipe smoke	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quit smoking • Never smoke in the home or car • www.smokefreehousingnc.com provides steps you can take to protect yourself and your family from secondhand smoke in your apartment
Mold	<p>Indoors: along windows, ceilings, drywall, insulation, carpeting, fabric, upholstery, wood, air conditioning units, under sinks, bathrooms, crawl spaces and basements, HVAC systems, humidifiers, plants, live Christmas trees</p> <p>Outdoors: leaves, trees, wet building components like wood, damp crawlspaces</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor and fix any leaks in roof, pipes, or windows • Dry water damaged areas and items within 24-48 hours • Use a dehumidifier or air conditioning to keep humidity between 30-50% • Use an exhaust fan in the bathroom and kitchen, and be sure it's vented to the outside • Ensure clothes dryers are vented to the outside • Avoid humidifiers • Clean any visible mold with soap and water • Keep windows closed during late summer and early fall • Use an artificial Christmas tree and minimize houseplants
Animal Dander	Anywhere pets spend time; furniture, bedding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep pets out of sleeping areas • Vacuum furniture with HEPA vacuum • Bathe/groom pet's coat regularly and outside the home • Consider finding your pet a new home

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Chemical Irritants	Furniture (pressed board, upholstered) and carpets (especially when new), paints, cleaning products, air fresheners, candles, personal care products, dry cleaned clothes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Let new furniture, carpets, and dry cleaning “air out” outside and open windows once inside to ventilate • Use low-toxic cleaning and personal care products • Avoid air fresheners and candles • If you must use a chemical irritant, make sure a person with asthma is not around, open windows and doors to ventilate, and follow instructions on the label so you don’t use too much
Unvented Gas Stoves	Kitchen, places with gas space heaters, gas water heaters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the overhead fan above the gas stove when a burner is on • Be sure the vent goes to the outside • Open a window • Install a carbon monoxide detector for safety and test/change batteries twice yearly • Never use the oven to keep you warm or heat your house • For unvented kerosene or gas space heaters, use the proper fuel • Open a window slightly or use an exhaust fan when you are using the heater
Wood Smoke	Indoors: fireplaces, wood stoves Outdoors: outdoor wood-burning stoves, wildfires, open burning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Burn only dry wood • Have a professional make sure chimneys are clean and working properly • Limit use of fireplace and open windows, if possible • Consider replacing old wood stove models with newer, clean-burning types • Report illegal burning activities at 1-877 OPEN BURN
Pollen	Indoors: window sills, table tops, floors (tracked in from outdoors) Outdoors: areas with grasses, leaves, trees; levels highest in morning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check levels daily in your newspaper or online • Stay inside during peak days and keep windows closed • Use HVAC unit to help filter air • Wet-clean window sills, surfaces, and floors • Don’t wear shoes indoors
Auto and Truck Traffic	Tailpipe pollution from cars and trucks, air near highways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Track outdoor Air Quality Index daily at www.airnow.gov and follow guidelines • Ride a bike or walk instead of driving • Carpool or ride the bus
Factory Pollution	Coal-fired power plants, industrial plants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Track outdoor Air Quality Index daily at www.airnow.gov and follow guidelines • Use less energy in your home by turning out lights and using energy efficient light bulbs and appliances • Recycle