

Environmental Asthma Triggers Kit



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at CHAPEL HILL

Overview

This is an activity used to demonstrate environmental asthma triggers and solutions 1-on-1 or with small audiences in the home or clinical environment.

Learning Objectives

By the end of the activity, participants will be able to:

- Examine examples of environmental asthma triggers commonly found in the home and outdoor environment.
- Understand ways to reduce exposure to environmental asthma triggers.

Audience

6th grade to adult

Materials

- Plastic container with lid (approximately shoe-box size)
- Examples of environmental asthma triggers (see table)
- Trigger/Solutions cards

Trigger	Examples
Dust Mites	Small stuffed animal
Cockroach/Pests	Plastic cockroach, mouse
Secondhand Smoke	Empty cigarette package
Mold	Photo on cube
Animal Dander	Photo on cube
Chemical Irritants	Air freshener, nail polish, perfume, nail polish removal, candle, cleaning products
Unvented Gas Stoves	Photo on cube
Wood Smoke	Photo on cube
Pollen	Artificial plant
Auto and Truck Traffic	Photo on cube
Factory Pollution	Photo on cube

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Duration

15 minutes

Activity Preparation

Collect examples of various environmental triggers and place in bin.

Instructions

1. Open the trigger kit and ask the participant if they have any of the examples currently in their home.
2. Explain that each of the items makes it harder to breathe for asthmatics and can trigger an asthma attack.
3. Review the “Trigger/Solutions” card and discuss ways the participant can find alternatives.
4. Encourage the participant to reduce environmental asthma triggers and emphasize that taking a multi-trigger approach is best.

Evaluation

- Ask participants to identify some actions they think are feasible to take to reduce potential environmental triggers.
- Follow up with participant at next appointment/contact to check in on the successes and challenges of those actions.

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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; dust mites like high humidity, so humidifiers increase the number of dust mites and your allergen
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 and E-cigarette Vape	Cigarettes, cigars, pipe smoke, e-cigarettes (vape pens, juul, suorin drop and others)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quit smoking and avoid vaping; they worsen lung health • Never smoke or vape 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	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 Outdoors: leaves, trees, wet building components like wood, damp crawlspaces	<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



Animal Dander



Truck and Auto Traffic



Factory Pollution



Wood Smoke



Mold



Unvented Gas Stoves

Dust Mite Solutions



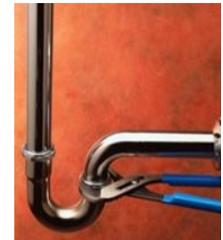
Cockroach and Pest Solutions



Secondhand Smoke Solutions



Mold Solutions





Animal Dander Solutions



Chemicals Irritants Solutions



Unvented Gas Stove Solutions



Wood Smoke Solutions





Pollen Solutions



Check levels daily



Wet cleaning

Auto and Truck Traffic Solutions



Factory Pollution Solutions



www.airnow.gov





These things can make it hard to breathe.



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ENVIRONMENTAL ASTHMA TRIGGERS

What is in your home?



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