

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT



## CLEARING THE AIR OF ASTHMA TRIGGERS

# 10 STEPS TO MAKING YOUR HOME ASTHMA-FRIENDLY

1. **Take it outside.** One of the most common asthma triggers in the home is **secondhand smoke**. Until you can quit, smoke outside, not in your home or car.
  2. **Good night, little mite! Dust mites** are also triggers for asthma. For mite population control, cover mattresses and pillows with dust-proof (allergen impermeable) zippered covers. Wash sheets and blankets once a week in hot water.
  3. **Play it Safe.** Ozone and particle pollution can cause asthma attacks. Watch for the Air Quality Index (AQI) during your local weather report. When AQI reports unhealthy levels, limit outdoor activities.
  4. **A little goes a long way.** Reduce everyday dust build-up, by regularly dusting with a damp cloth and vacuuming carpet and fabric-covered furniture.
  5. **Stake your claim. Household pets** can trigger asthma with skin flakes, urine, and saliva. Keep pets outdoors, if possible.
  6. **Uninvite unwelcome guests. Cockroaches** can trigger asthma. Don't invite them into your home by leaving food or garbage out. Always clean up messes and spills and store food in airtight containers.
  7. **Think before you spray.** Instead of pesticide sprays, control pests by using baits or traps. If sprays are necessary, always circulate fresh air into the room being treated and keep asthma sufferers out of that room for several hours after any spraying.
  8. **Break the mold. Mold** is another asthma trigger. The key to controlling mold is controlling moisture. Wash and dry hard surfaces to prevent and remove mold. Replace moldy ceiling tiles and carpet.
  9. **Air it out.** Reducing the moisture will control asthma triggers like **mold, cockroaches, and dust mites**. Use exhaust fans or open windows when cooking and showering. Fix leaky plumbing or other unwanted sources of water.
  10. **Plan before the attack.** Work with your doctor or health care provider to develop a written asthma management plan for your child that includes information on your child's triggers and how to manage them.
- Post a note.** Post this plan on your refrigerator to help *control asthma triggers and reduce asthma attacks in your home*. Share it with those who spend time with your child like teachers, babysitters, and coaches.