Family Education SheetAsthma Triggers



Clinical Education & Informatics family.ed@childrens.harvard.edu

Many things may cause asthma symptoms to start. These are called **triggers**. Everyone's asthma triggers are different. It is important to try to control your child's exposure to things that make his or her asthma worse. There are three types of asthma triggers: 1) **Irritants**, 2) **Allergies**, 3) **Infections**. These common trigger types are talked about in more detail in this sheet.

Irritant: Substances that irritate (bother) the nose, throat or airways

Type of irritant

Ways to manage irritants



Cigarette Smoke

- Do not smoke, especially in the home or car of a child who has asthma.
- People who smoke should change clothes before going into the home of a child who has asthma.
- Smokers in the home should try to quit smoking.
 - Visit quitworks.com for more info.



Strong Smells

- Try not to use the following around your child:
 - Perfumes
 - Aerosol sprays
 - Air fresheners
 - Strong smelling cleaning products. Clean with a mixture of vinegar and water, or baking soda and water instead.
- · Clean when your child is not home.

Allergens: A bad reaction to a certain substance or thing (for example: dust or animals)

Type of allergens

Ways to manage allergens



- · Keep furry or feathered animals out of the home.
- If you do have pets (such as a cat, dog or bird), keep them out of your child's bedroom.



Pests

- Keep your house and kitchen clean.
- Keep all food in closed containers.
- If you have pests (such as mice or cockroaches), hire a professional exterminator.



Dust Mites

Dust mites are tiny bugs that live in dust. To keep them out of your house, you can:

- Wash bedding in hot water once a week.
- Use mattress and pillow covers that are mite-proof.
- · Remove clutter from bedroom.
- Dust and vacuum once a week while your child is not in the room.
- Remove stuffed animals and toys from your child's bed.
- Keep toys and books in a covered container.

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Type of allergens

Ways to manage allergens



Mold growth can be found:

- In damp areas, such as in bathrooms or basements
- Outdoors, such as in soil, leaves and compost piles.

To prevent mold:

- Use vinegar and water or other "green cleaners."
- Use a dehumidifier regularly to help prevent mold growth in your home
- Do not have plants, aquariums or humidifiers in your child's room.
- Fix leaky faucets.
- Wipe damp areas dry.

Pollen is a fine powder released from flowers. To limit exposure:

- Keep windows and doors closed, especially during springtime.
- Use air conditioning with a filter that can be cleaned often.
- Shower, change clothes and wash hair after playing outside.



Infections: Includes Colds, Sinus Infections, Flu and Pneumonia

Preventing Infection

More tips on how to prevent infections



Hand Washing

- Wash hands often.
- When hands look dirty, wash hands with antimicrobial soap and water.
- When hands look clean, wash with alcohol-based hand rub.



- People with asthma can get very sick from the flu.
- Ask your doctor about getting the flu shot every year.

Other Asthma Triggers

Triggers

Ways to manage triggers



- **Exercise & Emotions**
- Dress your child warmly in cold weather.
- Cover mouth and nose with a scarf or other clothing.

Sometimes exercise can cause an asthma attack. Make sure your child:

- Warms up before and cools down after exercise.
- Uses reliever medication 15 minutes before exercise if told to do so by a health care provider.
- Keep your child calm if emotions trigger asthma.

This Family Education Sheet is available in Arabic, Cape Verdean, Simplified Chinese (China PRC, Singapore, Malaysia), Haitian Creole, Portuguese, Spanish and Vietnamese.