

# Asthma Triggers

## What to Know, What to Do

Learning what can make your child's asthma worse is important.

Activities or things that can set off asthma symptoms—such as coughing, wheezing, or breathing difficulties—are called triggers. But knowing what triggers set off your child's asthma can help you avoid an attack or symptoms whenever possible. Take a look below to see some common factors that can trigger asthma.

Keep an eye out for these common triggers\*

- |   |                                |  |
|---|--------------------------------|--|
| • Colds or viral infections   | • Cold air                     | • Grass, tree, weed pollens            |
| • Animal dander and saliva  | • Airborne molds               | • Dust mites                           |
| • Cockroach droppings   | • Cigarette smoke              | • Exercise                             |
| • Foods and food additives<br>(like preservatives used in salad bars) | • Strong odors/perfumes        | • Fumes from gas stove<br>or fireplace |
| • Aerosol sprays  | • Paints or varnishes          | • Household cleaners                   |
| • Dust/coal dust/chalk dust   | • Prolonged laughing or crying | • Reflux disease/heartburn             |
| • Medications   | • Emotional distress           |  |

### Trigger tips

Learn to identify your child's triggers, and then try these tips for reducing them to help your child feel his or her best.

#### Clean and dust weekly:

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|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Use a vacuum with a HEPA filter and/or microfiltration bags | <input type="checkbox"/> Dust with a damp cloth or mop                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wash bedding weekly in hot water (over 130° F)              | <input type="checkbox"/> Remove carpets, particularly from the bedroom |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Clean thoroughly with antimold cleaners                     |  |

**Note:** When vacuuming or cleaning, make sure your child is out of the room.

#### Take proper care of your child's toys:

- Wash soft toys and security blankets weekly in hot water (over 130° F)
- Keep most stuffed toys out of your child's bedroom as they trap dust and dust mites
- Leave security blankets at home or have one for home and a different one for outside the home

\*Asthma Triggers is to be used as a reference only. It is not to be used in place of a consultation with a physician.

### Reduce pet allergens and irritants:

- Keep pets off furniture and out of your car
- Keep pets out of the bedroom
- Wash and brush pets frequently
- Keep litter boxes in the basement, laundry room, or hall closet, rather than keeping them in the bedroom, bathroom, or other living areas of the home
- Vacuum rooms daily that pets frequent or other commonly used living areas of the home

**Note:** When vacuuming or cleaning, make sure your child is out of the room.

### Keep indoor air clean:

- Clean or replace heating and air conditioner filters monthly
- Clean or replace all room air filters monthly
- Use an air conditioner during warm-weather months
- Use a dehumidifier in the basement and in other areas where it is moist
- Do not allow cigarettes or pipes to be smoked in the house or car
- Limit exposure to wood-burning fireplaces or wood-burning stoves
- Avoid smoke exposure
- Use an exhaust fan in kitchens and bathrooms
- Use a room HEPA filter (not ionizer) in the bedroom and family/living room