



What you need to know about...

Asthma and Triggers

Asthma episodes often start when you come into contact with a “trigger”. There are two types of triggers: irritants and allergens. Irritants are things that bother your airways. Allergens are things that cause an allergic reaction in people. Everyone has different triggers so it is important to know what yours are and how to deal with them. Here is a list of common triggers which affect people with asthma and tips on what to do:

Allergens (things that you are allergic to)

Dust Mites

- Use dust mite proof mattress and pillow cover on your bed, wash sheets and stuffed animals regularly.
- Remove rugs or carpets (when possible), hard floor surfaces are easier to clean.

Animal Dander (Animals with fur or feathers)

- Remove animals from the home when possible.
- Keep animals out of bedrooms and off upholstered furniture.

Mold

- Clean mold with bleach (diluted with 10 parts water to 1 part bleach).
- Fix leaks in the bathroom and kitchen where mold likes to grow.

Pollen

- Keep windows closed and avoid being outside on days when there is a lot of pollen.

Cockroaches

- Keep food and garbage sealed, avoid eating in the living room and bedroom.
- If you have roaches, use gels and roach motels instead of sprays, powders, and foggers that can trigger asthma.

Irritants (things that irritate your lungs)

Tobacco Smoke

- Do not allow smoking in the house.
- If you smoke, consider quitting for you and of your family.
- Avoid wood burning and fireplaces and make sure if there is smoke that you are in a well ventilated area.

Pollution

- Avoid doing physical activity outside on Air Pollution Action Days.

Strong Odors

- Avoid using strong perfumes, colognes, talcum powder on yourself, aerosol sprays (hair spray, air fresheners), and candles in the house.
- Avoid using cleaning products with strong odors or dilute them with water.

Other Triggers

Weather

- Cold air can dry out your airways. Cover your mouth and nose if outside.
- Stay indoors on Air Pollution Action Days. Hot and humid days hold more pollen and pollution in the air making it difficult to breathe.

Exercise

- Warm up and cool down during exercise and stop if you are having trouble breathing.
- Speak to your healthcare provider about pre-medicating 15-20 min before exercising.

Infections

- A cold, flu, or sinus infection can make asthma worse.
- Get your flu shot annually.

Emotions

- Emotions do not cause asthma, but the changes in breathing patterns that comes with emotions can trigger asthma symptoms.
- Laughter, crying, and anger speed up breathing and this can irritate the airways causing coughing and then shortness of breath.

Trigger Tips

1. Never leave home without your quick relief/reliever inhaler.
2. Know your triggers and avoid contact with them as much as possible.
3. Take your triggers seriously, asthma gets worse with every trigger you come into contact with.