THE ✚ LUNG ASSOCIATION™

Asthma and Triggers in the
Home Environment

FACT Sheet

There are many different "triggers" (a trigger is anything that makes your asthma symptoms worse) that contribute to asthma symptoms. You can come into contact with triggers anywhere and one of the most common places is your home.

There are some easy changes that you can make to your home to help reduce the number of potential asthma triggers. In this fact sheet, we will go over these common household asthma triggers and discuss ways to reduce or eliminate them from your home. Remember - everyone is different! Multiple and differing factors can contribute to asthma within the same family.

COMMON TRIGGERS

- Dust and dust mites
- Pet allergies
- Mould
- Pollen
- Smoke

Have more questions?
More detailed information on air quality can be obtained by calling The Lung Association and requesting a **"Healthy Home Audit"** booklet.
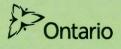
ASTHMA TRIGGERS CAN BE FOUND IN ALL HOMES

Remember – asthma triggers can be found anywhere including clean homes. Triggers of asthma tend to bother asthma sufferers more than those without.

DUST AND DUST MITES

Dust mites are tiny insects that feed on dead skin cells. They love warm humid places such as mattresses, pillows, beds sheets and blankets, carpets and stuffed animals.

HOW TO GET RID OF DUST MITES

- Keep the humidity level below 50%

- Do not use a humidifier in bedrooms

- Wash bed linens in hot water weekly and/or dry them in a hot dryer for 45 minutes

- Use synthetic (i.e. washable) blankets instead of duvets as these can collect a lot of dust

- Cover your mattress and pillows in zip-up dust mite covers

- Keep stuffed animals to a minimum. Put stuffed animals in the freezer for 24 hours, wash in hot water or put them in a hot dryer for 45 minutes

- Vacuum regularly using a H.E.P.A (high efficiency particulate air) filter. If possible, this should be done by someone who doesn't have asthma

- Keep your furnace and/or air conditioner filters clean

- Wash and dust curtains with a damp cloth frequently

Ontario

When you can't breathe, nothing else matters.™

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PETS

Saliva, dander and urine of an animal can trigger asthma symptoms.

HOW TO GET RID OF IT

- Keep your pet out of the bedroom at all times
- Bathe and groom your pet weekly
- Keep your pet outdoors as much as possible
- Avoid pets that you know you are allergic to

MOULD

Mould is found in damp and dark places; most commonly in the bathroom, basement, kitchen and outdoors. Cutting grass, raking leaves and working with compost can all cause your asthma to flare up.

HOW TO GET RID OF MOULD

- Allow air to flow throughout your house
- Use warm soapy water to clean mould. If possible, have someone who doesn't have asthma do the cleaning
- Mould can grow in the soil of your house plants so remove any white growth on the soil
- An air conditioner can filter out pollens and moulds in warm weather

POLLEN

Pollen is produced by plants and is released into the air. It can then enter your house through open windows and doors.

The most common pollens include;

- Tree pollen - common in the spring
- Grass pollen - higher in early summer
- Ragweed - common from late summer until the first frost

HOW TO AVOID POLLEN

- Use an air conditioner in warm weather to filter pollens out of the air
- Keep car windows closed if possible
- Try to avoid outdoor activity on sunny mornings and afternoons as this is when pollen counts are highest. Pollen counts are lowest after rainstorms and in the evenings
- If you're bothered by grass pollen, have someone else mow the lawn

CIGARETTE SMOKE

As well as being a major asthma trigger, cigarette smoke can give you asthma. It is essential to keep second hand smoke out of the home. If you smoke, the Lung Association can assist you if you decide to quit.

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