



# SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND ASTHMA COLLABORATIVE

## ASTHMA TRIGGERS CHECKLIST

### Dust Mites

- Vacuum carpet, rugs and fabric-covered furniture weekly with a High Efficiency Particulate Air (HEPA) filter vacuum.
- Reduce everyday dust build-up by creating smooth and cleanable surfaces, reducing clutter, and regularly dusting with a damp cloth. Using microfiber cloths for dusting are most effective.
- Wash bedding (sheets, blankets and coverings) and stuffed toys in hot water (130°) each week. Dry completely.
- Choose washable stuffed toys and wash them in hot water (130°) each week. Dry them thoroughly.
- Avoid having fabric-covered furniture, especially in your child's bedroom.
- Don't have carpeting. If you have any carpeting, area rugs that can be washed are preferable to wall-to-wall carpeting.
- Replace heating system filters each month during winter, and every three months during other seasons.
- Maintain low indoor humidity between 30-60% relative humidity.



### Mold

- Prevent dampness at home by using an exhaust fan or opening a window for at least 20 minutes during and after showering, cooking, washing dishes or using the dishwasher.
- Place lids on pots during cooking.
- Fix roof, window or plumbing leaks.
- Vent the clothes dryer to the outside.
- Wipe away mold from tile, shower curtains and other surfaces with a mixture of soap and water. Dry completely. Absorbent materials with mold on them, like carpeting and ceiling tiles, may need to be replaced.
- Limit the number of plants in your home. Molds can grow in the soil.
- Maintain low indoor humidity between 30-60% relative humidity.
- If you're having difficulty eliminating moisture in the air, purchase and use a dehumidifier.



## Odors

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- Open windows or doors, or use an exhaust fan, to air out your home.
- Use home-made green cleaning products that include ingredients such as baking soda and hydrogen peroxide.
- If you use store-bought scented products, always follow the instructions on product labels. Avoid using more than the recommended amount, circulate fresh air into the room where they are used, and keep children out of that room for several hours after using them.



## Pests

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- Keep counters, sinks, tables, cabinets and floors clean.
- Do not leave human or pet food out. Store food in sealed containers.
- Cover trash cans and take out the trash every day.
- Clean up standing water in dish racks, sinks, showers, and plant saucers.
- Clean up dishes, food crumbs, liquid spills, and any messes every day.
- Fix leaky plumbing, ceiling and roof leaks, and other sources of moisture or water.
- Seal cracks and openings where bugs can get into your home (outside faucets, holes, openings around or inside cabinets, areas around windows).
- Only if needed, use tamper and child-resistant poison bait stations.
- If needed, use Boric acid to eliminate cockroaches. It is generally non-toxic to humans. However, about 2 tablespoons of boric acid can be toxic to children if it is swallowed.



## Pets

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- Choose a pet that does not have fur or feathers.
- Consider keeping the pet outdoors or finding the pet a new home.
- Keep the pet out of your child's bedroom and other sleeping areas and keep the doors closed.
- Keep the pet off of fabric-covered furniture, carpets, and away from stuffed toys.
- Vacuum carpets and furniture weekly with a High Efficiency Particulate Air (HEPA) filter vacuum.



## Smoke

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- Don't smoke in your home or car.
- If you smoke, smoke outside and change clothes before coming inside.
- Ask smokers not to smoke near your child. Don't let your child ride in cars of people who smoke.
- Don't use wood burning fireplaces and avoid using indoor fireplaces.



## Other Triggers to Consider

### Respiratory Infections

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- Have your child wash his or her hands frequently.
- When your child is old enough to understand, discourage him/her from touching his/her face. Touching the nose or mouth is a common way for germs to be spread.
- Call your doctor if you think your child has a respiratory infection.



### Strong Emotions

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- Identify the circumstances and the kinds of feelings associated with situations that precede asthma attacks (laughing or crying too hard, stress, anger, fear and yelling). Knowing what those situations are can help your child gain a sense of control over the situations.
- Find ways to remove your child from stressful situations.

