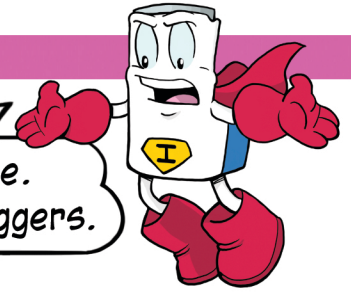


# Asthma Triggers



A "trigger" is something that makes your child's asthma worse. You and your child can learn to avoid and prevent exposure to triggers.

## Smoke

Secondhand smoke from cigarettes, cigars, and pipes irritate airways and can trigger asthma attacks.

Other types of smoke – such as from wood-burning stoves or fireplaces – can irritate airways.



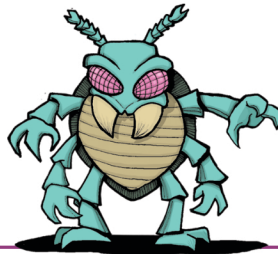
### What can you do?

- Never smoke near children with asthma.
- People should avoid smoking anywhere your child spends time – such as your home or car.
- Smoking outside can still trigger asthma, because smoke stays in clothes and hair.

## Dust Mites

Dust mites are tiny bugs you cannot see.

They live in mattresses, sheets, pillows, and stuffed toys.



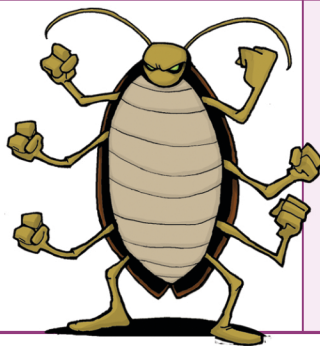
### What can you do?

- Use "dust mite protective" covers for your child's mattress and pillowcases.
- Keep stuffed animals, extra pillows, and piles of clothes off the bed.
- Wash bedding in hot water every week.
- Remove carpeting if possible, or vacuum carpet once a week.

## Cockroaches

Cockroaches are attracted to food crumbs and water.

They live in the walls of kitchens, especially if your house is in the city.



### What can you do?

- Vacuum or sweep areas that attract cockroaches regularly.
- Keep food in sealed containers.
- Use roach traps in your kitchen or other areas that may attract roaches.

## Pets

Pets with fur or feathers can trigger an asthma attack.

They produce "dander" which is dried skin flakes, often mixed with urine, poop, saliva and hair.



### What can you do?

Unfortunately, the best way to keep animal dander away is to remove the pets from your home. If you can't or don't want to find a new home for your pet, you can...

- Keep pets out of the bedroom.
- Vacuum often.
- Mop hard floors weekly.

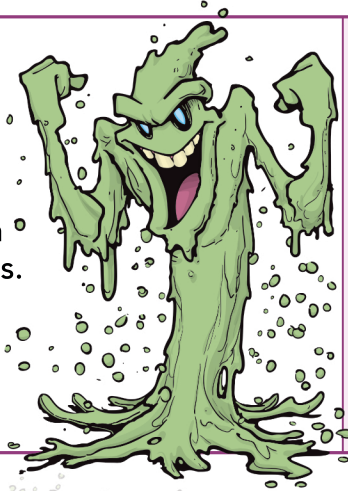
## Asthma Triggers (continued)

### Mold

Mold grows indoors in basements, bathrooms, and other damp places.

Mold grows outdoors in soil and in piles of leaves.

It gets in the air, so breathing in mold can trigger an attack.



#### What can you do?

- Fix water leaks – sinks, pipes, tubes, and toilets. Leaks can let mold grow behind your walls and under your floors.
- You may need to use a dehumidifier.
- Improve air flow through rooms in your home.
- Avoid playing in piles of leaves.

### Pollen

The pollen of trees, grass, and weeds can trigger your child's asthma.

Pollen counts are highest between 5 AM – 10 AM and on dry, hot and windy days.



#### What can you do?

- Talk to your doctor about seasonal allergies.
- Know which pollen (and season) affect your child:
  - Ragweed (fall)
  - Trees (spring)
  - Grass (summer)
- When pollen counts are high, try to keep windows closed and use air conditioning.

### Exercise

If your child's asthma is poorly controlled, exercise may cause an asthma attack.

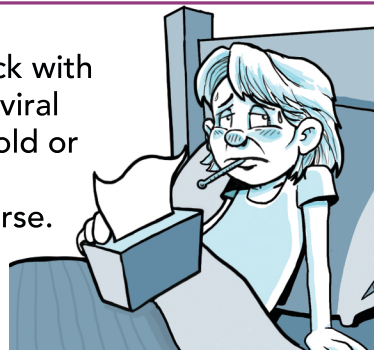


#### What can you do?

- Talk to your doctor about how to keep your child's asthma in control, so your child can enjoy the benefits of exercise.
- Your child may need to take their quick reliever before physical activities, like running, or before gym class.

### Cold or Flu

When your child is sick with an upper respiratory viral infection, such as a cold or the flu, their asthma symptoms can be worse.



#### What can you do?

- Review the Asthma Action Plan from your doctor. With a cold or the flu, your child may be in the Yellow Zone of the action plan.
- Washing hands can help prevent catching colds and the flu.
- Getting a flu shot every year can help prevent flu.