

Asthma Triggers

Asthma is a common lung disease that affects both children and adults. In NYC, more than one in every 10 children between the ages of 1 and 13 have asthma. During an asthma episode (attack), the airways in the lungs swell, making it hard to breathe. While asthma cannot be cured, it can be controlled. People with asthma can live active, healthy lives.

To control your asthma, make sure to take medications as prescribed and avoid triggers. Triggers can cause asthma attacks or make asthma symptoms worse. They are found inside and outside the home. Everyone's triggers are different, so it is important to keep track of what affects your asthma. Below are some common triggers and ways to avoid them.

Location	Trigger	What You Can Do
Outdoors	 Very hot or very cold weather	Check the weather report every day for: • Extreme temperatures (very hot or very cold) • Air pollution levels (also known as air quality index) • Pollen counts Limit time outside and heavy physical activity on extremely hot or cold days, or when air pollution levels or pollen counts are high. If temperatures allow, keep windows and doors closed when air pollution levels or pollen counts are high. Use air-conditioning on recirculation mode to avoid letting in outside air. Use a portable indoor air cleaner.
	 Air pollution or wildfire smoke	
	 Pollen	
Outdoors and Indoors	 Cold and flu viruses	Wash hands often to prevent cold and flu. Clean frequently touched surfaces at home, especially if someone is sick. Get a flu shot every year.
Indoors	 Dust	Remove clutter and dust regularly. Mop, vacuum, and use microfiber or wet cloths to clean dust from surfaces. Sweeping spreads dust around and can make asthma symptoms worse.
	 Tobacco smoke	Quit smoking and do not allow smoking inside your home or car.
	 Pet dander	Do not allow furry pets on furniture or in rooms where someone with asthma sleeps.
	 Mold and mildew	Air out damp areas , such as your bathroom or kitchen, to prevent mold and mildew. Fix leaks and remove any standing water.
	 Chemicals with strong smells (such as cleaning products, paint, deodorizers, or air fresheners)	Avoid using chemicals with strong smells. If you must use them, use the smallest amount possible and open windows or use fans to get rid of odors.
	 Gas stoves and cooking	Turn on the stove exhaust fan or open a nearby window or door to increase airflow. Never use a gas stove to heat your home.
	 Pests (such as cockroaches or mice)	Pest-proof your home.

Pest-Proof Your Home To Reduce Asthma Triggers

Cockroaches and mice affect indoor air quality and can trigger allergic reactions or asthma attacks. Children with asthma living in pest-free homes have fewer symptom days, hospital stays, and school absences than those living in homes with pests.

Remove garbage, fix leaks, and seal cracks to get rid of the food, water, and shelter that pests need to live. This safe pest control method is called **integrated pest management**, or **IPM**.



Keep Your Home Clean and Dry

- ☐ Keep food in sealed containers.
- ☐ Keep counters and sinks free from food waste and dirty dishes.
- ☐ Vacuum carpets and wet-clean hard floors at least weekly.
- ☐ Get rid of clutter, such as cardboard, newspapers, and paper bags.
- ☐ Do not leave pet food out overnight.



Manage Garbage

- ☐ Use garbage cans with tight-fitting lids.
- ☐ Rinse recyclables before putting them in recycling bins.
- ☐ Take garbage and recycling out every day.
- ☐ Tie up garbage bags before putting them in compactor chutes. Do not put loose garbage or open bags in chutes, and do not overstuff compactor chutes.



If Other Pest Control Measures Are Needed

- ☐ Use bait stations and gel for cockroaches and ants.
- ☐ Use traps for mice.
- ☐ Never use foggers, sprays, bombs, or loose rodent bait.
- ☐ Never use illegal or unlabeled pesticides such as Sniper DDVP, Tres Pasitos, Push Out/ Phosphide, Chinese Chalk, or Tempo Dust.
- ☐ Store pesticides safely and place traps where children and pets cannot get to them.



Report Water Leaks, Holes, and Pests to Building Staff

- ☐ If you see pests, tell your property owner immediately. If your property owner does not fix the problem, call **311**.
- ☐ Let building staff into your home to make any needed repairs.
- ☐ Let pest management professionals into your home for pest control services.
- ☐ Be sure to tell them if there are children or pets in the home.

For more information about safe and effective pest control, visit nyc.gov/health/healthyhomes.

For more information about controlling asthma, visit nyc.gov/health/asthma or call **311** and ask for **Healthy Homes**.