

Asthma: Environmental Triggers in the Home

AIR Multnomah County Asthma Inspection Referral Program <http://www.multco.us/air>

Improving indoor air quality in the homes of children with asthma can lessen the severity of asthma, reduce emergency room visits and hospitalizations and improve quality of life. Encourage patients to limit or eliminate the following environmental contaminants to improve their asthma control:

Environmental Tobacco Smoke

- If caregiver smokes, always smoke outside of the building.
- If second-hand smoke is entering the home through ducts or vents, patient can work with the landlord to make reasonable accommodation requests.
- Smoking in common areas is against the law in Multnomah County.

Smoke from Fireplaces

- Avoid wood fires, the smoke can trigger an asthma attack.
- If a fire is only source of heat, burn dry, seasoned hardwoods and only solid wood- not pressure-treated wood, particleboard, or plywood.
- Clean chimneys annually, and use wood stoves made after 1992, they meet higher air quality standards.

Mold

- Keep home warm enough (68 degrees for a few hours each day).
- Keep home well ventilated- use bathroom fan until the mirror is clear and use a fan or open the window while cooking. Simmer foods with a lid rather than boiling rapidly.

Dust, Dander and Mites

- Dust surfaces and vacuum frequently, including upholstery preferably with a HEPA vacuum.
- Wash blankets, pillow covers, mattress pads and stuffed animals in hot water every week.
- Replace wool or feathered bedding with synthetic materials and use washable stuffed animals.
- Remove fabric curtains and upholstered furniture from the bedroom.

Pets

- Keep pets outside.
- If you do have pets inside, keep them out of sleeping areas and off fabric-covered furniture.
- Wipe your pet's paws before letting them inside -they can track in pollen and other allergens.

Pollen

- Have people remove shoes at the door.
- If this is not possible use 2 doormats, one outside and one inside of the door that you keep as clean as possible.

Household chemicals and fragrances (e.g. bleach, incense, air fresheners)

- Use unscented laundry products and cleaning agents.
- Air out dry-cleaned clothing before wearing.
- Do not use candles or incense.
- Use unscented soaps and lotions.
- Do not use chemical air fresheners, such as plug-ins, wicks or sprays.

Pests: Roaches and Rodents

- Store food in tightly sealed containers and don't leave out pet food or water overnight.
- Fix plumbing leaks and drips.
- Seal cracks where roaches and other pests can enter the home.
- Vacuum frequently, preferably with a HEPA vacuum.

