

# Get Rid of Triggers

Because you have asthma, your airways are very sensitive. Things, called triggers, may cause them to become swollen, tighten up and make more mucus. These triggers may make asthma symptoms worse and can keep you from getting better. You might not be bothered by all of the triggers on this list. Remember to keep your rescue inhaler with you at all times!

**It's important for you to find out what your asthma triggers are and learn ways to avoid them!**

## What are my triggers?

### **Tobacco and other smoke**

- Do not smoke. Smoke makes asthma worse.
- Do not let anyone smoke in the house or car.
- Ask household members to quit smoking.
- Do not use wood burning stoves, fireplaces, or kerosene heaters.



### **Strong Odors and Sprays**

- Do not use perfume and perfumed cosmetics such as talcum powder or hair spray.
- Do not use air fresheners, scented candles, or incense.
- Use non-scented household cleaning products.
- Reduce strong cooking odors (especially frying). Use an exhaust fan and open windows.
- Stay indoors when the air pollution level is high.
- Do not stay in your home while it is being painted. Allow enough time for the paint to dry before returning.



### **Colds and infections**

- Avoid people with colds or the flu if possible.
- Get rest, eat a balanced diet, and exercise regularly.

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- Talk to your doctor about getting a flu shot
- Do not take over-the-counter cold remedies, such as antihistamines and cough syrup, unless you talk to your doctor first

### **Exercise**

- Make a medicine plan with your doctor that lets you exercise without symptoms
- If exercise is one of your triggers, take your rescue medicine 15 minutes before exercising
- Warm up before and cool down after exercising

### **Weather**

- Wear a scarf over your mouth and nose in cold weather
- Pull a turtleneck over your nose on windy or cold days
- Dress warmly in the winter or on windy days

### **Extremes of emotions**

- Have a rescue inhaler ready when laughing, screaming or crying. These may trigger coughing or wheezing.

## **Do I have allergies?**

Your doctor may have you tested for allergies that may include:

### **Animal Dander**

- Keep animals outside. If that is not possible, keep animals away from the bedroom and off of furniture.
- Try to stay away from other homes with pets.

- Take quick relief medicine before going places where there are animals.



- Choose a pet without fur or feathers, such as a fish or a snake.

- Do not use products made with feathers such as pillows and comforters.

### **Cockroaches**

- Have someone else spray your home for insects while you are outside. Air out the home for a few hours after spraying.
- Use cockroach traps.

### **Dust**

- Reduce rugs, stuffed toys, and carpets in bedrooms and living areas.
- Use shades or washable curtains.
- Put zippered covers on mattresses and pillows.
- Use washable blankets and bedspreads.
- Use hypoallergenic pillows and blankets.

### **Indoor Molds**

- Keep bathrooms, kitchens and basements well-ventilated.
- Clean bathrooms, kitchens, and basements regularly.
- Do not use humidifiers.
- Use dehumidifiers for damp basement areas.

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### **Outdoor Pollens and Molds**

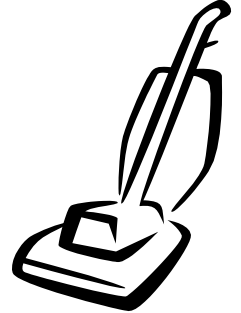
- Stay indoors during the midday and afternoon when the pollen count is high.
- Use air conditioning
- Keep windows closed during seasons when pollen and mold are highest.
- Avoid moldy items such as wet leaves and garden debris.

### **What can I do in my house to help with triggers?**

Follow these ideas for keeping your house clean and free of triggers:

#### **Weekly**

- Damp mop floors
- Wash sheets and pillows on hot cycle
- When you vacuum, wear a face mask



#### **Monthly**

- Wipe walls, baseboards, shelves and furniture with a damp cloth
- Change air filters every 2 months
- Wash curtains every 4 to 6 months