

# AVOIDING ASTHMA TRIGGERS & ALLERGEN EXPOSURE

Triggers are things that make your asthma worse. The more you can keep away from your triggers, the better you'll feel. Do you know your triggers? Put an X in the box next to each of your asthma triggers. Then find your asthma triggers in the picture and circle them.

- PETS
- DUST MITES
- COOKING ODORS
- SMOKE
- EXERCISE OR ACTIVITY
- CHANGES IN WEATHER



- DAMPNESS (MOLD)
- PLANTS AND TREES (POLLEN)
- STRONG ODORS/SMELLS
- SPRAYS (HAIRSPRAY & CLEANERS)
- POLLUTION
- COLDS OR FLU

What asthma triggers and allergens do you see?

## DUST MITES

- Put your mattress and pillow in an allergy-proof cover
- Reduce clutter, toys, stuffed animals and collections in bedroom
- Don't sleep on upholstered furniture
- Wash bedding in hot water (130F) every week
- Wash or place stuffed toys in freezer overnight every week in a Ziploc bag
- Remove carpet & rugs if possible
- Vacuum & damp dust weekly
- Change furnace filters regularly
- Replace curtains with blinds

## ANIMAL ALLERGY/PETS

- We do not recommend owning furry or feathered pets. If this is not an option then bathe furry pets and vacuum with HEPA vacuum once a week, every week
- Keep pets out of the bedroom/bed at all times
- Take allergy medicine (antihistamine) 1 hour before going to a relative or friends home with pets

## MOLD/MILDEW

- Repair leaks and clean visible mold with a stiff brush, hot water, and soap (see green cleaning handout)
- Ventilate bathroom and kitchen by using an exhaust fan
- Use a dehumidifier (set the humidity level between 25-50%. Empty and clean regularly.
- Do not use humidifiers or vaporizers
- For outdoor molds-avoid handling wet leaves, mulch, soil or garden debris

## POLLEN

- Limit time outside when pollen count is highest (between 5am-10am).
- Keep windows closed and use air conditioning
- Keep an eye on local weather and pollen counts. Dry, windy, sunny days increase the pollen count, Rain or cloudy conditions tend to keep the pollen numbers down.
- Spring and fall, when plants are blooming is prime pollen time
- Don't hang clothes out to dry
- Take antihistamine seasonally as needed

## COCKROACHES/ROACHES/RODENTS

- Keep counters, sinks, tables, and floors clean
- Clean dishes, crumbs, and spills
- Store food in airtight containers
- Cover trash cans
- Use baits that are not powder or sprays

## POLLUTION

- Check Air Quality Index (<http://airnow.gov/>) and limit exercise and outdoor activity on poor air quality days
- Close windows on poor air quality days or during construction near your home
- Enforce "No Idling" policies for buses and cars near schools
- Hot and humid days can worsen the effects of pollution and pollen, take precaution outdoors on those days

## STRESS/STRONG EMOTIONS

- Practice breathing/relaxation techniques
- Take steps to reduce stress

## SMOKING

- Quit smoking! (QUITLINE 866-QUIT-YES)
- Don't allow smoking in your home and especially in the car or around the child
- Wear a smoking jacket or smock each time you smoke outside and leave it outside the home
- Wash your hands and face after smoking

## COLD AIR

- Wear a scarf in cold weather that covers mouth/nose
- Dress appropriately for the weather
- Take medication as prescribed

## STRONG ODORS

*(This includes: Perfumes, plug-ins, hairspray, cleaning products, candles, incense, aerosol sprays)*

- Clean the house with mild, white vinegar based cleaning solution (see green cleaning handout)
- Use ventilation or open windows when cleaning
- Clean when the person with asthma is not home

## RESPIRATORY INFECTIONS

### PREVENTION MEASURES;

- Wash hands regularly with soap and use paper towel to dry hands instead of cloth towel
- Don't share cups, towels, or utensils, etc.
- Get flu shot yearly!

### IF ALREADY SICK:

- Take medication as prescribed
- Drink plenty of fluids
- Rest