

ASTHMA

& Common Triggers

Recognize, Reduce or Eliminate Common Asthma Triggers
in Your Home or Child Care Center

TRIGGER | Secondhand Smoke

Asthma attacks can be triggered by the smoke from the burning end of a cigarette, pipe or cigar and the smoke exhaled by a smoker. Exposure to secondhand smoke may cause some children to develop asthma.

What you can do:

- Don't allow smoking in your home or car.
- Don't let anyone smoke near your child.
- Take the Southern Nevada Health District's smoke-free home or child care center pledge by visiting www.GetHealthyClarkCounty.org.

TRIGGER | Dust Mites

Dust mites are tiny bugs that you can't see. They live in sheets, pillows, furniture, carpets and stuffed toys. The body parts and droppings of dust mites can trigger an asthma attack. Common house dust may also contain asthma triggers.

What you can do:

- Wash bed sheets and blankets at least once a week in hot water.
- Cover mattresses and pillows in dust-proof covers.
- Vacuum carpets, rugs, floors and upholstered furniture regularly.
- Wash stuffed toys regularly in hot water. Dry completely.
- Limit the number of stuffed toys in the bed and room of the child with asthma.
- Dust often with a damp cloth.

TRIGGER | Mold

For people sensitive to molds, inhaling mold spores can cause an asthma attack. If mold is a problem in your home, you need to clean up the mold and eliminate sources of moisture.

What you can do:

- If you see mold, clean it up immediately with soap and water.
- Use exhaust fans or open a window when showering, cooking or washing dishes.
- Fix leaky plumbing or other sources of water as soon as possible.
- Dry damp or wet items within 24-48 hours to prevent mold growth.
- Replace absorbent materials such as ceiling tiles and carpet if mold is present.

TRIGGER | Pests (such as cockroaches and rodents)

Cockroach body parts and droppings may trigger asthma attacks. Hair, skin flakes and droppings from rodents may also be asthma triggers.

What you can do:

- Keep counters, sinks, tables and floors clean.
- Clean dishes, crumbs and spills immediately.
- Store food in air tight containers.
- Keep all garbage in plastic bags and cover trash cans tightly.
- Seal holes or gaps between construction materials and pipes.



TRIGGER | **Pets**

Dead skin flakes, urine, saliva and hair from cats and dogs can trigger an asthma attack. Smaller pets such as gerbils, guinea pigs and even birds can also be triggers.

What you can do:

- If pets are a recognized asthma trigger, consider finding a new home for them.
- Keep pets outside if possible.
- If your pets are inside, keep them out of the bedroom of the child with asthma and off the furniture.
- Vacuum carpets and furniture often.

TRIGGER | **Nitrogen Dioxide**

Nitrogen dioxide is an odorless gas that can irritate your eyes, nose and throat and may cause shortness of breath. This gas can come from the use of appliances that burn fuels such as gas, wood, and kerosene.

What you can do:

- Use fuel-burning appliances that are vented outside.
- Never use gas cooking stoves to heat your house.
- Use the proper fuel for unvented kerosene or gas space heaters and open a window slightly or use an exhaust fan in the room when using the heater.
- Always open the flue in your fireplace before building a fire.
- Make sure the doors of wood stoves are tight fitting.
- Always follow the manufacturer's instructions.

TRIGGER | **Chemical Irritants**

Chemical irritants found in some products in your house such as scented or unscented products including cleaners, paints, pesticides, cosmetics or air fresheners may make your child's asthma worse.

What you can do:

- Use these products less often and ensure your child is not around when you use them. Also, consider using other products.
- Follow the instructions on the label. If you use these products try to make sure that windows or doors are open and that you use an exhaust fan.

TRIGGER | **Outdoor Triggers**

Air pollution can also trigger asthma attacks. The main air pollution triggers are small particles and ozone. These particles come from smoke, dust and emissions from cars and factories. Levels of particulate pollution can be high at any time of year and are generally higher near busy roads. Asthma attacks can occur on the same day, but may also occur the day AFTER outdoor pollution levels are high.

What you can do:

- Reschedule a high-energy outdoor activity to avoid the period when air pollution levels are high.
- Reduce the time or intensity of the outdoor activity when pollution levels are high.
- Postpone outdoor sports activities to another time if air pollution levels are high.

Source: United States Environmental Protection Agency