



# Asthma Triggers

Asthma episodes can be prevented by staying away from exposures that make your asthma worse. Review the list of items below to see which asthma triggers you're affected by and talk with your doctor about steps you can take to control your asthma.

## TOBACCO SMOKE, STRONG ODORS & SPRAYS

- All smoke is an irritant that can cause inflammation in your airways. If you smoke, ask your doctor for ways to help you quit.
- Secondhand smoke is the smoke coming from a cigarette or other smoked tobacco product and the smoke exhaled by a smoker.
- Do not allow smoking in your home or car. Secondhand smoke is dangerous to anyone who breathes it in.
- Strong odors and sprays, such as perfume, detergents and hair products can also trigger asthma.

## DUST MITES

- Dust mites are tiny insect-like pests that live in cloth or carpet. Exposure to dust mites can lead to allergic reactions and asthma attacks. Make sure to wash sheets AND blankets weekly.
- Don't use down-filled pillows, quilts or comforters.

## PETS

- All pets can cause allergies and aggravate symptoms. Make sure to give pets a bath weekly.
- Keep pets with fur or hair out of your home if you are allergic to them. Try to keep pets out of your bedroom.

## MOLD

- Dehumidify basements if possible, and clean your tubs, sinks and toilets at least once per month.
- Dispose of old produce before it develops mold.

## POLLEN

- Allergies to outdoor plants, pollen and mold spores can worsen asthma symptoms. Pollen is highest during the middle of the day and afternoon.
- If possible, stay indoors during allergy season with windows closed during the afternoon.
- Ask your doctor whether you need to take or increase anti-inflammatory medicine before allergy season starts.

## EXERCISE OR SPORTS

- If you have asthma symptoms when you are active, you need to see your doctor.
- Ask your doctor about taking medicine before you exercise to prevent symptoms.

## OTHER PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES

- Get vaccinated for respiratory infections, such as flu, pneumonia and COVID-19.
- Extreme weather (both humidity and cold) can also cause asthma symptoms.
- Some medications used for high blood pressure or pain relief can increase risks of asthma symptoms. Talk with your doctor or pharmacist about your medication list.
- Work with your doctor to manage food allergies, acid reflux and being overweight — all of which may make asthma worse.

## TOOLS & RESOURCES

From health tips and guidelines that help you stay informed, to useful online and mobile tools that help make it easier to manage your health, Independent Health has the tools and resources you need to lead a healthier life.

To learn more, visit the "My Health" section at [independenthealth.com](https://independenthealth.com).

