

Indoor Air Quality and Asthma

Most of us spend a lot of our time indoors. Indoor air can have pollutants that trigger asthma attacks. Managing the air quality in your home can help prevent asthma attacks before they happen.

Problems you may notice right away



More asthma symptoms



More severe respiratory infections



More doctor and hospital visits

Longer-term problems



Impaired lung health and development



Less ability to be active

See below for common asthma triggers in the rooms of your home.

Read the ideas on how to improve air quality in your home and check the things you can do.

Dust mites are too small to be seen. They live in mattresses, pillows, carpets, clothes, and stuffed toys.

- What to do:**
Create a safe sleep zone.
- Wash bedding and other fabrics in hot water weekly.
 - Choose washable stuffed toys, and keep them off beds.
 - Cover mattresses and pillows in dust-free zippered covers.



Mold grows in damp areas such as bathrooms and shower curtains.

- What to do:**
Keep surfaces dry.
- Fix water leaks.
 - Install an exhaust fan to control moisture and slow mold growth.
 - Replace materials that collect mold.
 - Clean up mold from hard surfaces.



Secondhand smoke from cigarettes, pipes, wood stoves, or fireplaces pollutes indoor air.

- What to do:**
Make your home a smoke-free zone.
- Do not allow smoking in your home.
 - Do not burn wood in your home.



Pets. Your pet's hair, skin flakes, urine, and saliva can trigger asthma attacks.



- What to do:**
Avoid fur and feathers.
- Keep pets out of sleeping areas.
 - Keep pets off fabric-covered furniture, carpet, and stuffed toys.
 - If needed, keep pets outdoors or find them a new home.

Pests like cockroaches and rats find food crumbs. Their droppings can trigger asthma attacks.

- What to do:**
Keep clean.
- Don't leave food or garbage out.
 - Clean up all food crumbs and spilled liquids right away.
 - Use baits or traps instead of pest-control sprays.



Everyday Fixes

Reduce asthma and allergy triggers



Vacuum, dust, and wash bedding weekly.



Use “green” cleaning products. Don’t mix cleaning products such as chlorine and ammonia.



When weather permits, open windows and doors — especially when painting, sanding, or using chemicals.



Avoid scented products like perfumes and candles.



For detailed instructions on how to clean up mold, go to www.epa.gov/mold/mold-cleanup-your-home.

Home Improvement

These tasks may require a bit more planning — but you can still do them. These improvements can prevent short-term and long-term health problems for you and your family.



Increase airflow

- Install kitchen and bathroom exhaust fans **that send air outside**. This can help dry the air and prevent mold and mildew.
- Make sure fireplaces and wood stoves vent air outside.
- Make sure stoves, heaters, and other gas appliances vent air outside.



Buy safe products

- When buying new furniture, carpets, or mattresses, look for products that are formaldehyde free. Products should also have low-VOC or no-VOC finishes.
- Consider replacing carpet with hard floors.



Use air cleaners

- Change the filters on heaters and air conditioners regularly.
- Use a vacuum cleaner with a HEPA filter.
- If you have asthma or allergies, consider buying an air filtering system. (You can get a portable one.)



Find causes

- Test for radon.** Radon can cause lung cancer. Testing is easy and cheap — and problems can be fixed. To learn how, ask for the Intermountain fact sheet about radon.
- Have heaters and appliances checked for leaks. Fix problems.

For help with resources for these improvements, contact <http://slco.org/green-healthy-homes/>

For more information. The information in this fact sheet is adapted from the EPA Indoor Air Quality website. For more information, go to www.epa.gov/indoor-air-quality-iaq.

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