

# Asthma Triggers

Triggers are things that can cause asthma symptoms or make asthma worse. Triggers can be things like smoke, allergies, illness or strong smells. Avoiding triggers can reduce the chance of an asthma attack and may decrease the need for more medicine.

Stay away from these asthma triggers to prevent symptoms:

**Allergies:** An allergen is something that bothers some people but not all. Allergens are breathed into the lungs where they cause swelling and asthma attacks. You and your doctor may decide that allergy testing is an option for you.

Allergy tests help find what may be causing allergy symptoms. Knowing what causes an allergic reaction can help avoid these triggers. Allergy tests are often done to evaluate:

- Triggers for asthma patients
- Environmental allergies, like hay fever

**Smoke:** Do not smoke. It is bad for everyone. If you can smell the smoke, then it is hurting your lungs.

- Do not smoke in or let others smoke in your house or car.
- Avoid secondhand smoke. Ask family members to stop smoking.
- If you are a smoker, ask for help.



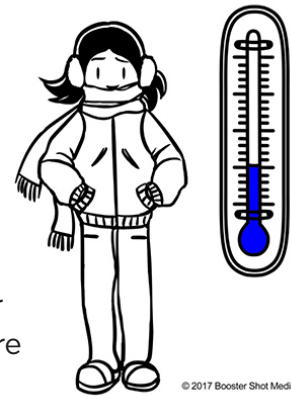
- Anything that burns can make smoke (examples: campfires, incense, candles, and smudging). These things can trigger an asthma attack.

**Colds and Viruses:** Colds can make asthma worse.

- Follow your asthma action plan.
- Take asthma medicine.
- Wash hands often.
- Get a flu shot every year.

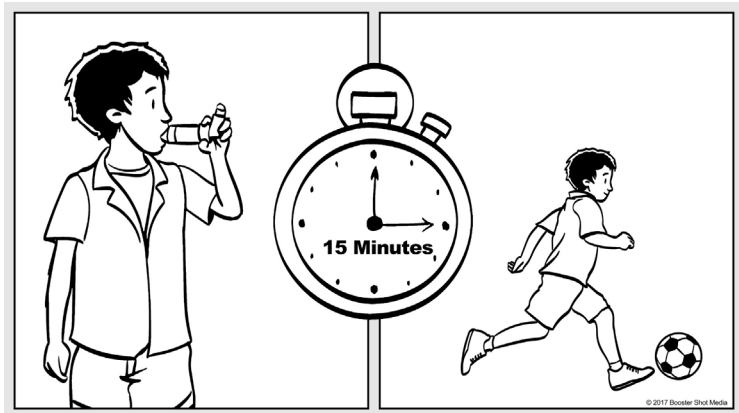
**Weather Changes:** Asthma symptoms may be worse if it gets really cold or really hot outside.

- Cover nose and mouth with a scarf on cold days.
- Stay indoors in air conditioning on hot and humid days.



**Exercise/Being Active:** It is important to be active even if you have asthma. You should be able to do all the things people your age can do. When asthma is in control you will be able to be more active, but sometimes being active can make symptoms worse.

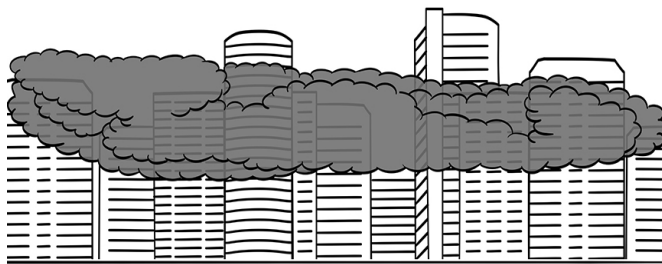
- Start activity slowly. Warm up for 10 minutes before activity.
- Talk to your provider or nurse about taking asthma medicine before activity. Taking medicine before activity can keep asthma symptoms away during exercise.
- If you cannot be as active as you want or you are limiting your child's activity, talk to your doctor.



If needed, take asthma medicine 15 minutes before you exercise or are active

**Strong Smells/Sprays:** Strong smells can make asthma worse.

- Strong smells include: Sprays or liquids used for cleaning, deodorants, perfumes, hair sprays, paints, diffusers, candles and campfires.
- Open windows when using cleaning products, and stay out of the room for two hours.



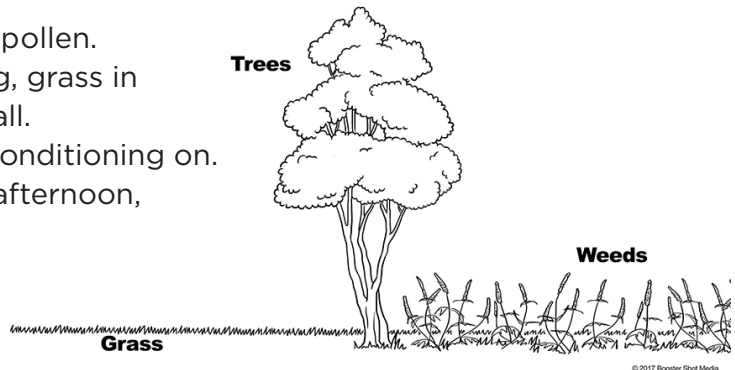
**Air Pollution:** Poor air quality can make asthma worse.

- Check air quality online or in the newspaper.
- Do not exercise outside on poor air quality days.
- Stay inside. Look for air-conditioned places.

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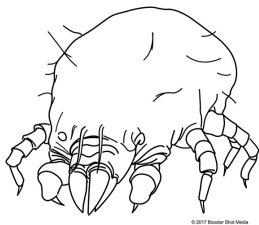
**Pollen:** Grass, trees and weeds make pollen. Allergens include tree pollen in spring, grass in summer and ragweed and molds in fall.

- Try to keep windows closed & air conditioning on.
- Try to do outdoor activities in the afternoon, when the pollen counts are lower.
- Ask your doctor if you need to add or increase your medicine before the allergy season starts.



**Animal Dander:** All pets with fur or feathers make dander.

- Dander is protein found in skin flakes, urine, poop, saliva and hair.
- The best thing to do is keep furry or feathered pets out of your home.

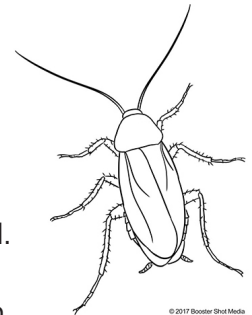


**Dust mites:** Dust mites are found in many places and can make it hard to breathe.

- Cover pillows, mattress, and box springs in a special dust-proof cover.
- Wash all bedding weekly in hot water with soap.

**Cockroach:** Dead cockroach bodies and droppings mix with house dust and can be inhaled.

- Seal entryways.
- Keep food in closed containers.
- Do not use roach bombs to kill the roaches. Use roach motels instead.



**Molds:** Mold grows in moist areas where lights are low. You can find it in the bathroom, basement, under sinks, in potted plants and along windowsills.

- Clean moldy surfaces with a cleaner that has bleach in it.
- Reduce indoor humidity if possible.
- Fix leaky sinks, pipes, tubs or toilets.

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