



For Tenants

Reducing Common Asthma Triggers

Asthma can be triggered by things that are commonly found in homes. You can do things to help you keep your home free of these asthma triggers, and help you better control your asthma or your child's asthma.

Keep it dry

Mold and mold spores are major asthma triggers. They can grow on damp or wet surfaces. These are often found in kitchens, bathrooms, and basements. The key to mold control is moisture control.

- Turn on the bathroom fan or open a window during and/or after showers or baths.
- Turn on the kitchen fan or open a window when washing dishes.
- Close the windows during heavy rain.
- Use a clean dehumidifier, air conditioner, or both, to keep humidity between 35% and 50%.
- Use a clean dehumidifier in the basement to keep humidity between 35% and 50%.
- Wash and dry hard surfaces to prevent mold growth.

Keep it clean

- Remove shoes and/or wipe feet on a doormat before coming inside.
- Keep dining tables and kitchen counters free of crumbs and spills.
- Wash dishes and counter tops right away after eating or preparing food.
- Clean bathrooms and kitchens at least once a week.
- Cover mattresses and pillows in dust-proof zippered covers. (Look for a cover that is allergen-impermeable.)
- Change bed sheets every week, wash them in hot water, and dry them completely.
- Wash all other bedding in hot water and dry it completely at least once a month.
- Keep stuffed toys off of children's beds.
- Wash stuffed animals in hot water, dry them completely, and then put them in the freezer over night to kill dust mites.
- Keep pets out of bedrooms or outdoors as often as possible. (Dogs, cats, hamsters, and birds can be asthma triggers.)
- Bathe pets weekly, and clean pet bedding and litter every week.
- Dust furniture every week.
- Vacuum carpets and fabric-covered furniture every week. (Look for a vacuum that says HEPA filter, allergen control, or low emission.)
- Vacuum and wet mop floors every week.
- Clean basements, attics, garages, under large appliances, and inside cabinets and drawers at least once a year.
- Donate, recycle, or throw away things you don't use.

**For information, visit www.health.ri.gov or call the Health Information Line:
401-222-5960 / RI Relay 711**



Keep it pest free

Pests such as cockroaches and rodents (and their droppings) can make someone's asthma worse. They are often found in kitchens, bathrooms, and basements because they find food and water there.

- Clean up food as soon as possible after cooking and eating.
- Keep food in closed containers in the kitchen.
- Store all trash in garbage cans with lids.
- Rinse recyclables before putting them in a bin.
- Avoid saving boxes, paper bags, or newspapers in piles.
- Put traps for pests near walls, under sinks, and in cabinets.
- Check and replace traps.
- Avoid using pesticide spray or fogging.
- Use pesticide gel or boric acid for cockroaches and poison baits or sticky traps for rodents.
- If you have a serious pest problem, consider hiring a professional exterminator.

Keep it safe

- If you or your child has asthma: Have an Asthma Action Plan. (It is a treatment plan you develop with your doctor.)
- Know you or your child's asthma triggers.
- Avoid your asthma triggers whenever possible.
- Consider finding a new home for your pet(s) if you or your child are allergic to them.
- Listen to the weather report and stay indoors when ozone levels are high.
- Close windows and use air conditioning on ozone action days.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a scarf when outside on very cold days.
- Wash your hands frequently and use antibacterial gels.

Keep the air moving

- All fuel-burning appliances (stoves, water heaters, and furnaces) should be vented properly.
- Open windows in warmer weather.
- Use fans in bedrooms and living rooms.
- Open windows and doors while you clean.
- Clean and dust heating and air conditioning vents regularly.
- Try to not use fragrances, air fresheners, scented candles, and other household products with strong odors.

Keep it poison free

- If you smoke, quit smoking.
- Don't allow smoking in your home or your car.
- Don't use toxic cleaners or other toxic household products.

Keep it maintained

- Put trash outside on garbage day.
- Check for signs of pests.
- Rake leaves, dirt, and dust away from your house and bag it for garbage pickup.