

# Asthma-Friendly HOME CHECKLIST

**This checklist will help you learn about and control your asthma triggers. Follow this checklist to help make your home asthma and allergy friendly.**

This checklist gives you a list of questions, information on the most common triggers, and ways you can get rid of or reduce a trigger.

- Start with the “Is This Your Trigger?” column and answer Yes, No or Don’t know/Not sure.
- In the other columns, read about the trigger, where it is found, and recommended ways to fix it.
- When you have questions, talk with your health care provider or asthma educator (for example, if you checked “Don’t know/Not sure” as an answer).

### **For more information, visit:**

Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America: [aafa.org](https://aafa.org) • 800-7-ASTHMA  
**asthma & allergy friendly**<sup>®</sup> Certification Program: [aafa.org/certified](https://aafa.org/certified)  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: [cdc.gov/asthma/triggers.html](https://cdc.gov/asthma/triggers.html)  
Environmental Protection Agency: [epa.gov/asthma](https://epa.gov/asthma)



**ASTHMA** Care for Adults  
Asthma Symptoms, Treatment, Health Management and Activities™

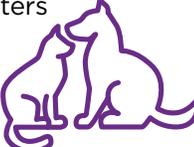
More resources for managing asthma are available in this course: [aafa.org/asthmacare](https://aafa.org/asthmacare)



Asthma and Allergy  
Foundation of America  
800-7-ASTHMA • [aafa.org](https://aafa.org)

**ASTHMA** Care for Adults  
©2018 Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America  
First Edition and Medical Review August 2018  
Updated Review and Revised Edition February 2022

# ASTHMA-FRIENDLY HOME CHECKLIST

Is this your trigger?	What is this trigger?	Where is it found?	Recommended ways to fix it
<p>Are your asthma/allergy symptoms worse during certain seasons?</p> <p>Yes            Spring      Fall            Summer    Winter</p> <p>No</p> <p>Sometimes</p> <p>Don't know/Not sure</p>	<p><b>Pollen:</b> Tiny grains released from trees, weeds, and grasses that blow through the air</p> 	<p>Pollen is found outside most seasons, but is usually worse in spring and fall.</p> <p><b>Spring:</b> Trees and grasses</p> <p><b>Summer:</b> Grasses and weeds</p> <p><b>Fall:</b> Ragweed and other weeds, some trees</p> <p><b>Winter:</b> Some trees in warmer climates</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep windows shut and use air conditioning. If you do not have air conditioning, go to a cool place during hot days (library, mall, cooling center).</li> <li>• Stay inside if it's a high pollen day.</li> <li>• Cover your hair when you go outside or shower from head to toe before bed.</li> <li>• Take allergy medicine per doctor's orders.</li> <li>• Check pollen levels on your local news, allergist's website, weather app, or <a href="http://pollen.aaaai.org">pollen.aaaai.org</a>.</li> </ul>
<p>Are your asthma/allergy symptoms worse when around furry or feathered animals?</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>No</p> <p>Don't know/Not sure</p>	<p><b>Furry or Feathered Animals and Pets:</b>            Dander (proteins) from any animal's saliva, urine, or skin cells, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dogs</li> <li>• Cats</li> <li>• Guinea pigs</li> <li>• Hamsters</li> <li>• Birds</li> </ul> 	<p>Dander can be found on and under furniture, on clothing, carpets, and walls.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep all animals out of the bedroom.</li> <li>• Vacuum weekly with a <b>CERTIFIED asthma &amp; allergy friendly</b>® vacuum.</li> <li>• If possible, remove carpet or use washable rugs. Cover fabric furniture with washable slipcovers. Wash often in hot water.</li> <li>• Wash hands and face after touching animals.</li> </ul>

## Notes:

# ASTHMA-FRIENDLY HOME CHECKLIST

Is this your trigger?	What is this trigger?	Where is it found?	Recommended ways to fix it
<p>Are there a lot of fabric-covered items in your house and bedroom?</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>No</p> <p>Don't know/Not sure</p>	<p><b>Dust Mites:</b> Tiny bugs you can't see with your eyes. They live nearly everywhere and you can be allergic to their "dead bodies" and droppings.</p> 	<p>In anything made of cloth or fabric:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Curtains/drapes</li> <li>• Wall-to-wall carpeting</li> <li>• Upholstered furniture</li> <li>• Bedding and mattresses</li> <li>• Stuffed animals/toys</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use CERTIFIED <b>asthma &amp; allergy friendly</b><sup>®</sup> pillows, pillow covers and bedding.</li> <li>• Wash sheets and blankets weekly in hot water 130° F or hotter.</li> <li>• Keep humidity between 30 and 50%.</li> <li>• Reduce fabric items. Items should be washable or easy to clean. For example, remove extra throw pillows.</li> <li>• If possible, remove carpet or use washable rugs. Cover fabric furniture with washable slipcovers. Wash often in hot water.</li> <li>• Dust weekly with a damp cloth.</li> <li>• Keep rooms clutter free.</li> <li>• Store items in closed containers, drawers, or behind cabinet doors.</li> <li>• Vacuum weekly with a CERTIFIED <b>asthma &amp; allergy friendly</b><sup>®</sup> vacuum.</li> </ul>
<p>Do you see cockroaches, rats or mice in your home? Do you see evidence of pests like droppings (poop) from rats or mice?</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>No</p> <p>Sometimes</p> <p>Don't know/Not sure</p>	<p><b>Pests:</b> Cockroaches, rats or mice</p> 	<p>Pests live everywhere, especially in dark, damp places and behind walls, furniture and clutter.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep all food and garbage in closed, sealed containers.</li> <li>• Remove clutter, like piles of paper, boxes, and bags.</li> <li>• Fix water leaks.</li> <li>• Don't leave water sitting in sinks or pots and pans.</li> <li>• Plug up cracks around foundations, windows, and doors with caulk.</li> <li>• Use poison baits and traps instead of bombs and sprays.</li> </ul>

# ASTHMA-FRIENDLY HOME CHECKLIST

Is this your trigger?	What is this trigger?	Where is it found?	Recommended ways to fix it
<p>Is there water damage, moisture or leaks in your home? Do you have damp carpet or leaky plumbing? Can you smell mold or mildew?</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>No</p> <p>Don't know/Not sure</p>	<p><b>Mold and Mildew:</b> Black, brown, or red spots</p> 	<p>Mold and mildew can be found in places that are damp or wet like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bathrooms</li> <li>• Laundry rooms</li> <li>• Kitchens</li> <li>• Basements</li> <li>• Outdoors in leaves, grass, and dirt</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Run a fan or open a window (if pollen counts are low) during a bath or shower and for 20 minutes after.</li> <li>• Keep areas where mold grows clean and dry (like sinks, bathtubs, and garbage cans).</li> <li>• Use soap and water or other safe products to clean, then dry the area.</li> <li>• Fix leaks quickly.</li> <li>• Use a dehumidifier.</li> <li>• Wear a mask when raking leaves or mowing. Or have someone else do it for you.</li> </ul>
<p>Do you have a food allergy? Has it been diagnosed by your doctor?</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>No</p> <p>Don't know/Not sure</p>	<p><b>Food:</b> Food allergy is not a trigger of asthma attacks, but if you have asthma and food allergies, you are at higher risk for severe allergic reactions. Common food allergens:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Milk</li> <li>• Peanuts</li> <li>• Tree nuts</li> <li>• Eggs</li> <li>• Sesame</li> <li>• Soy</li> <li>• Wheat</li> <li>• Fish or shellfish</li> <li>• Other foods</li> </ul> 	<p>If you have asthma, it can make an allergic reaction to food worse. A severe allergic reaction to food (called anaphylaxis) can cause even more swelling in your airways.</p> <p>Avoidance of the food is the best way to prevent allergic reactions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Get a food allergy action plan from your doctor. Share with trusted friends, family and co-workers.</li> <li>• Always have epinephrine with you.</li> <li>• If you have a severe allergic reaction, use your epinephrine auto-injector first, and then seek medical attention. Follow up with your health care provider right away.</li> </ul>

## Notes:

# ASTHMA-FRIENDLY HOME CHECKLIST

Is this your trigger?	What is this trigger?	Where is it found?	Recommended ways to fix it
<p>Does anyone smoke or vape in your home or car?</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>No</p> <p>Don't know/Not sure</p>	<p><b>Tobacco Smoke:</b> Smoke from cigarettes, vape pens, cigars, and pipes can make asthma worse.</p> 	<p>Tobacco smoke exposure comes from firsthand smoke (you smoking a tobacco product), secondhand smoke (you breathe in the smoke from someone else who is smoking), or thirdhand smoke (you are exposed to tobacco chemicals on surfaces like clothing, walls, and furniture).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid tobacco smoke from all sources.</li> <li>• Stop smoking. Talk with your health care provider about ways to stop smoking, or visit <a href="https://www.smokefree.gov">smokefree.gov</a>, or call 1-800-QUIT-NOW (800-784-8669).</li> <li>• Make a rule that no one can smoke in your home or car.</li> </ul>
<p>Do you have a gas stove, wood stove, or fireplace? Do you use portable propane, natural gas, or kerosene heaters?</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>No</p> <p>Don't know/Not sure</p>	<p><b>Smoke and Combustion Fumes:</b> Burning any fuel product, like wood, charcoal, or kerosene gives off smoke and/or combustion fumes. The smoke and fumes contain gases and particles that can irritate your lungs.</p> 	<p>Pollutants from any source of fire can cause asthma symptoms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gas stoves/cooktops</li> <li>• Wood stove or fireplace</li> <li>• Portable propane, natural gas, or kerosene heaters</li> <li>• Fireplaces/fire pits</li> <li>• Incense and candles</li> <li>• Barbecues or grills</li> <li>• Wildfires</li> <li>• Outdoor trash burning</li> <li>• Controlled field burning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid combustion fumes and smoke from all sources.</li> <li>• Use electric heat instead of fireplaces, wood stoves, or non-electric portable heaters if possible.</li> <li>• When it's time to replace your stove or cooktop, choose electric instead of gas.</li> </ul>

## Notes:

# ASTHMA-FRIENDLY HOME CHECKLIST

Is this your trigger?	What is this trigger?	Where is it found?	Recommended ways to fix it
<p>Are your asthma/allergy symptoms worse on hazy days or when you are near running cars or buses?</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>No</p> <p>Don't know/Not sure</p>	<p><b>Air Pollution:</b> Harmful gases and chemicals in the air and/or tiny specks of dirt or other airborne compounds</p> 	<p>Air pollution can trigger symptoms year-round.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check air quality at <a href="https://www.airnow.gov">AirNow.gov</a>.</li> <li>• On bad air pollution days, stay indoors, close windows, and use air conditioning or fans.</li> <li>• Use CERTIFIED <b>asthma &amp; allergy friendly</b><sup>®</sup> air cleaners (purifiers) and/or filters.</li> <li>• Use cleaner options for transportation (mass transit, hybrid or electric vehicles, walking, and biking).</li> </ul>
<p>Are your asthma/allergy symptoms worse around products with strong odors or fumes?</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>No</p> <p>Don't know/Not sure</p>	<p><b>Smells and Scents</b></p> 	<p>Any item that has an odor might trigger an asthma flare-up. Common ones include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cleaners</li> <li>• Bleach</li> <li>• Pesticides</li> <li>• Air fresheners or plug-ins</li> <li>• Potpourri, scented candles, essential oils</li> <li>• Perfume/aftershave</li> <li>• Cosmetics</li> <li>• Lotions</li> <li>• Paints</li> <li>• Glues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid items that have any odor.</li> <li>• Switch to less toxic “free and clear” or “green” products.</li> <li>• Learn how to make your own safe and “green” cleaners.</li> <li>• Avoid paint or other products with strong odors. If you can't, open windows and use fans and a mask. Look for CERTIFIED <b>asthma &amp; allergy friendly</b><sup>®</sup> paint.</li> <li>• Use an exhaust fan or open a window when using an unvented gas or kerosene space heater or a gas stove.</li> <li>• Use products with low emissions of volatile organic compounds (VOCs).</li> </ul>

## Notes:

# ASTHMA-FRIENDLY HOME CHECKLIST

Is this your trigger?	What is this trigger?	Where is it found?	Recommended ways to fix it
<p>Does getting a cold or flu make asthma/allergy symptoms worse?</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>No</p> <p>Sometimes</p> <p>Don't know/Not sure</p>	<p><b>Colds, Flus, and Other Viruses</b></p> 	<p>Respiratory infections like colds and the flu spread from person to person through the air and by contact with hands or objects.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wash hands often. Use hand sanitizers when soap and water are not available.</li> <li>• Sneeze or cough into the fold of your elbow, not hands.</li> <li>• Do not share food or drinks with anyone who has a cold, flu, or other spreadable illness.</li> <li>• Wear an N95 or KN95 mask when in crowded, indoor spaces.</li> <li>• Stay active and get plenty of sleep to boost your health.</li> </ul>
<p>Do you have other illnesses (like GERD, "heartburn") that worsen symptoms?</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>No</p> <p>Don't know/Not sure</p>	<p><b>GERD and Other Illnesses</b></p> 	<p>GERD causes heartburn. It is a disease that causes a burning feeling in the chest that happens when stomach acid backs up.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not lie down 2 to 3 hours after eating.</li> <li>• Avoid foods that cause GERD symptoms.</li> <li>• Take medicine as recommended.</li> </ul>
<p>Do you have shortness of breath or tire easily when running and exercising hard?</p> <p>Do asthma/allergy symptoms get worse during or after sports or exercise?</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>No</p> <p>Sometimes</p> <p>Don't know/Not sure</p>	<p><b>Exercise-Induced Asthma:</b> Symptoms during or after sports, running, or exercise</p> 	<p>During or after sports, exercise or when running hard, you may have symptoms.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talk with your doctor about using quick-relief medicine before activity.</li> <li>• Warm up for 10 to 15 minutes before activity with jumping jacks, walking or stretching.</li> <li>• Cool down after activity for 10 minutes.</li> <li>• Breathe through your nose to warm the air going into your airways.</li> <li>• If it is cold outside, cover your mouth and nose with a scarf or mask if possible.</li> </ul>

# ASTHMA-FRIENDLY HOME CHECKLIST

Is this your trigger?	What is this trigger?	Where is it found?	Recommended ways to fix it
<p>Do asthma/allergy symptoms get worse when you are angry or excited?</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>No</p> <p>Sometimes</p> <p>Don't know/Not sure</p>	<p><b>Emotions:</b> Muscles tighten up, and breathing rate increases</p> 	<p>Strong emotions, like laughing hard or crying, can trigger asthma symptoms.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Laughing is great! If laughing triggers your asthma, work with your health care provider on a plan for this. You do not want to avoid laughing.</li> <li>• Learn how to express frustration without yelling. Breathe deeply and slowly when stressed out.</li> </ul>
<p>Are your symptoms worse on cold, hot or stormy days?</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>No</p> <p>Sometimes</p> <p>Don't know/Not sure</p>	<p><b>Extreme Weather:</b> Changes in temperature and storms that stir up pollen and dust, like thunderstorms</p> 	<p>Weather can trigger symptoms when you go outside.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stay cool and indoors if you are hot and drink water and sports drinks.</li> <li>• Cover your mouth and nose with a mask or scarf when outside in cold weather.</li> <li>• If your area has a thunderstorm warning, stay indoors with the windows closed.</li> </ul>
<p>Are your asthma/allergy symptoms worse after using any medicines?</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>No</p> <p>Sometimes</p> <p>Don't know/Not sure</p>	<p><b>Medicines</b></p> 	<p>Common medicines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (ibuprofen, naproxen, aspirin)</li> <li>• Beta-blockers (acebutolol, carvedilol, betaxolol)</li> <li>• ACE Inhibitors (lisinopril, fosinopril, benazepril)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid over-the-counter medicines that are a known asthma trigger for you.</li> <li>• Tell your health care provider about any medicines, herbs, supplements, or vitamins you are taking.</li> <li>• ACE Inhibitors can cause a chronic cough which could be mistaken for an asthma symptom.</li> <li>• Talk with your doctor or pharmacist about other medicine options.</li> </ul>

**Did you know?** AAFA can help you find products that are healthier for your home. Our **asthma & allergy friendly**<sup>®</sup> certification program sets high standards for home and indoor products. We test products in independent labs and only the products that pass every test become **CERTIFIED asthma & allergy friendly**<sup>®</sup>. Look for this mark on products or visit [aafa.org/certified](http://aafa.org/certified) to find products that meet these standards.

