



# ASTHMA FRIENDLY HOMES

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## **Asthma is a chronic lung disease.**

While asthma cannot be cured, there are measures you can take to reduce your asthma symptoms, especially within the home:

- **Be aware of your asthma symptoms and warning signs;**
- **Be aware of your personal asthma triggers and minimise them;**
- **Use your medication as prescribed to treat and prevent your asthma.**

We spend up to 90% of our time indoors so the quality of the air within the home is vital for people with asthma. Research has shown that, in some cases, the air within a home can be up to five times more polluted than the air outside.

Managing your asthma triggers within your home will allow you to have a much better quality of life.

# ASTHMA TRIGGERS IN THE HOME

## PETS



### FACT:

**61% OF IRISH HOUSEHOLDS OWN EITHER A CAT OR DOG**

### TIPS:

- If you are allergic to certain pets, rehome the pet if possible
- Keep pets away from living areas
- Keep pets away from fabric-covered furniture, rugs and carpets
- Ensure your pet is properly washed by someone without an allergy
- Vacuum regularly using a vacuum suitable for pet hair

## DUST/ DUST MITES

### FACT:

**OVER 70% OF DUST WITHIN THE HOME IS DEAD SKIN CELLS**

### TIPS:

- If you are allergic to dust, damp-dust the house at least once a week
- Remove any unwanted clutter to avoid gathering dust
- Wash sheets, pillow covers and blankets at 60 degrees every week
- Use allergy-proof covers for mattress, pillow and blankets
- Vacuum your pillows and mattress
- Wear a dust mask when dusting



## MOULD

### FACT:

**MOULDS CAN BE FLUFFY, POWDERY OR SLIMY**

### TIPS:

- Try not to dry clothes indoors
- When showering or cooking, use your extractor fan or open a window
- Moulds will only grow in moist conditions:
  - Check for any leaks around your pipes or water appliances
  - Use a dehumidifier to reduce the moisture content if necessary



## SMOKE



### FACT:

**THERE ARE OVER 7,000 CHEMICALS IN TOBACCO SMOKE AND 10<sup>14</sup> HARMFUL "FREE RADICALS" PER PUFF**

### TIPS:

- Don't smoke or allow others to smoke in your home
- Open fires are dangerous for people with asthma - consider having a more asthma friendly heating arrangement like a sealed stove
- Ensure your chimney is cleaned to allow steady flow of smoke

## CLEANING PRODUCTS



### FACT:

**BLEACHES, POLISHES AND AIR FRESHENERS CAN ALL CAUSE AN ASTHMA ATTACK**

### TIPS:

- Use warm water for cleaning, where possible
- Choose solid/liquid cleaners over spray cleaners
- Use cleaning products that are labelled allergy friendly or stick to the traditional vinegar, baking soda or lemon and ensure the work area is well ventilated

## GAS COOKERS/ COOKING APPLIANCES



### FACT:

**THE KEY TO COOKING SAFELY WITH ASTHMA IS KEEPING FUMES TO A LOW LEVEL**

### TIPS:

- Ensure that the kitchen is ventilated
- Use an extraction fan when cooking
- Maintain gas appliances and ensure they are serviced regularly
- Have a carbon monoxide alarm installed in your home

For more help from our asthma nurses on how to make your home asthma friendly

**ASTHMA ADVICELINE 1800 44 54 64**

# TOP CLEANING PRACTICES

## VACUUMING



If house dust mite triggers your asthma, it is recommended you use a vacuum cleaner with a HEPA filter. Open the windows open while vacuuming, keeping them open for half an hour afterwards. By using a vacuum cleaner with good suction and a filtered exhaust, you can be sure your vacuum cleaner is not simply spreading allergens around your home.

The filters of vacuum cleaners should be changed in accordance with the instruction manual. In the bedroom, cover your bed with a clean sheet whilst vacuuming.

## AIR PURIFYING



Air filters and purifiers clean the air and can reduce the number of asthma triggers such as pet dander, mould spores, dust and tobacco smoke particles if used alongside other methods of trigger management.

They can't remove all allergens and even those left behind can trigger asthma symptoms. You should:

- Check exactly the type of allergens it captures
- Check that it is ozone-free. Some purifiers give out low levels of gas which can exacerbate asthma symptoms
- Clean and replace all filters as instructed



## DAMP-DUSTING

Dust collects in corners of rooms, on skirting boards or picture rails, in windows, blinds and curtains, so clean them all thoroughly. When dusting, use a damp cloth and rinse it out carefully as you go. Never flick the dust into the air with a dry duster or feather duster.

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Asthma Adviceline **1800 44 54 64**

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