

MAINTAINING AN ASTHMA-FRIENDLY HOME

Tips for Parents

House Dust Mites:

- ◆ Encase mattresses and box springs in an airtight cover.
- ◆ Either encase pillows or wash them in hot water once every week.
- ◆ Wash bed covers, clothes, and stuffed toys once a week in hot water (130 degrees F).

Other Actions to Reduce Dust Mites:

- ◆ Reduce indoor humidity to less than 60%, ideally 30-50%. Use a dehumidifier as needed.
- ◆ Remove carpets from the bedrooms of those with asthma.
- ◆ Do not allow asthmatic children to sleep or lie on upholstered furniture. Replace with vinyl, leather, or wood furniture.
- ◆ Remove carpets that are laid on concrete.
- ◆ Use exhaust-port HEPA (high-efficiency particulate air) filters on vacuums, or central vacuum.

Animals:

- ◆ If your child is allergic to animals, avoid having animals in your home.
- ◆ Choose a pet without fur or hair (such as a fish or snake).
- ◆ If you must have a warm-blooded pet, keep the pet outside of your child's bedroom at all times. Outside the home is even better.
- ◆ If your home has forced-air heat, close air ducts in your bedroom.
- ◆ Avoid visiting homes with pets. If you must go to such a home, take your **quick relief** (albuterol bronchodilator) and prevention medications before going.

Cockroaches:

- ◆ Use insect sprays; have ALL persons, especially those with asthma out of the home while you are spraying. **Wear a mask**

yourself while spraying. Roach traps may also help.

- ◆ All units in a multiple-family dwelling (apartment buildings, etc.) must be treated to eliminate roaches.

Tobacco Smoke:

- ◆ Do not smoke.
- ◆ Do not allow smoking in your home.
- ◆ Have household members smoke outside.
- ◆ If you smoke, wear a smoking jacket, and leave it outside when you come in.
- ◆ Do not smoke in your car, or other confined areas where your children will be.
- ◆ Choose no-smoking areas in restaurants, hotels, and other public buildings.

Wood Smoke:

- ◆ Do not use a wood-burning stove to heat your home.
- ◆ Do not use kerosene heaters.
- ◆ If cooking outside, keep the child with asthma away from the smoke.

Colds and Infections:

- ◆ Talk to your doctor about flu shots.
- ◆ Keep your child away from people with colds or the flu, whenever possible.
- ◆ Wash hands frequently. Cover mouth and nose when coughing and sneezing.

Strong Odors and airborne droplet or dry Particle irritants:

- ◆ Avoid strong odors associated with paint, perfume, talcum powder, cleaning products, or strong cooking odors.
- ◆ Use exhaust fans and open windows when cleaning, cooking, or spraying chemicals. keep volatile chemical fumes dispersed by having good ventilation in the room.

Adapted from: Partners in Asthma Care, National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (1995), reviewed by Asthma Ready® Communities Staff (2010).