

Prescription for Managing Your Asthma

Your provider can help you make your own **Asthma Action Plan**, so you know what to do based on your symptoms. Decide who should have a copy of your plan and where they should keep it.

Know your “asthma triggers.” They can be very different from those of someone else with asthma. Learn how to avoid asthma attacks by staying away from your triggers, which may include any of the following:

- **Outdoor air pollution** that comes from factories, cars, and other machinery. Pay attention to air quality forecasts and plan your outdoor activities around them.
- **Furry pets:** Avoid them as much as possible. People with asthma who own pets should bathe them weekly and keep them out of bedrooms. Vacuum often and be sure to damp mop hard flooring every week.
- **Mold:** Get rid of mold in your home to help control attacks. Higher humidity levels can promote the growth of mold. An air conditioner or dehumidifier will help keep humidity low. Repair water leaks that let mold grow behind walls and under floors.
- **Tobacco smoke or smoke from burning wood or plants:** If you smoke, make every effort to stop. Do not allow others to smoke in your home or car. Avoid campfires and burning wood inside your home.
- **Dust mites** are in almost all homes. Use mattress and pillowcase covers to make a barrier between dust mites and yourself. Avoid down-filled bedding. Wash your bedding on the hottest water setting. Remove stuffed animals and clutter from your bedroom. Keep pets out of your bedroom, as well.

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- **Cockroaches and their droppings** can trigger an asthma attack. Vacuum or sweep areas that might attract cockroaches at least every two-to-three days. They are often found where food is eaten and crumbs are left behind. Consider using roach traps or gels.
- **Infections linked to colds and flu** can trigger an asthma attack. Get your annual flu shot. Sinus infections, allergies, and acid reflux can also cause asthma attacks. Take all of your medications that treat these conditions exactly as prescribed by your provider.
- **Physical exercise** can sometimes lead to an asthma attack. Continue to exercise, but do so at an intensity directed by your provider.
- **Weather conditions** such as thunderstorms, high humidity, and cold dry air outside are triggers for some people with asthma. Air conditioners and dehumidifiers will rid the air of moisture inside your home. To avoid breathing in cold dry air when outdoors, wear covering over your mouth and nose so the air you breathe in is warm.
- **Some foods, food additives, and fragrances** can bring on an attack. Identify those that may be triggers for you and stay clear of them.
- **Strong emotions** that lead to very fast breathing may cause an asthma attack. Learn slow, deep breathing exercises to help you avoid hyperventilation when emotions are running high.

Know your own triggers and learn how to avoid them. Watch out for an attack when you cannot avoid one. Rely on your **Asthma Action Plan** to help you through an attack. Take your long-term control medicines even when you don't have symptoms. **Remember, you can control your asthma!**

Information furnished provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

