Asthma Triggers at Home

**Second Hand Smoke**
Tobacco smoke can trigger an asthma attack.

- If you smoke, ask your doctor or pharmacist for help quitting.
- Do not allow smoking in your home or car.
- Utah resources to help people quit smoking include:
  - Utah Tobacco Quit Line: 1.888.567.TRUTH (8788) – A free telephone based service to help people quit tobacco.
  - Utah QuitNet: www.utahquitnet.com – A free internet based service to help people quit tobacco.

**Mold**
Mold can be an asthma trigger. To help control mold in the home:

- Reduce moisture.
- Clean water spills and leaks within 24-48 hours.
- Use fans or open a window when showering or cooking.
- Fix water leaks in pipes, the roof, and other places.

**Pets**
Pets’ dander, urine, feces, and saliva can cause allergic reactions.

- Find a new home for your pet. If that is not an option:
  - Keep pets out of bedrooms.
  - Keep bedroom doors closed.
  - Remove upholstered (fabric covered) furniture and carpet or at least keep pets off the furniture and carpet.

**Pests and Pesticides**
Pests include mice, cockroaches, and other insects or unwanted animals. Droppings and body parts of pests can be asthma triggers.

- Keep your house clean. Put food away quickly and don’t leave garbage out.
- Practice Integrated Pest Management
  - Don’t attract pests – Put food away, fix water leaks, and get rid of hiding places for pests like cardboard boxes.
  - Keep them out – Don’t let pests inside your home. Fix cracks and other openings to the outside.
  - If you have pests, get rid of them in the safest, most effective way.
- Use baits and traps over other types of chemical agents (the chemicals can be irritating to a person with asthma).
**Asthma Triggers at Home**

**Air Pollution and Pollen**
Air pollution and pollen can cause asthma symptoms.

- Stay inside when pollen counts are high. Close the windows and use the air conditioner.
- Avoid exercising outside when air quality is poor. Check the hourly air quality levels at [www.airquality.utah.gov](http://www.airquality.utah.gov).

**Dust mites**
Dust mites are tiny insects found in house dust. Dust mites can be an asthma trigger.

- Use pillow and mattress allergen-impermeable (dust proof) covers.
- Wash sheets and blankets once a week in hot water (over 130 degrees F). Reduce the number of stuffed toys and wash them weekly.
- Keep indoor humidity low (below 60%).
- Remove carpets from the bedroom and any carpeting that is laid directly on concrete.
- Don’t sleep or lie on upholstered (fabric-covered) furniture.

**Other**
- Avoid fumes from wood burning appliances or fireplaces.
- Avoid strong odors and fumes (including perfume).
- Vacuum once or twice a week to reduce dust.
  - If you are sensitive to dust, stay out of rooms being vacuumed and ask someone else to vacuum. If you do vacuum, use a dust mask, a central vacuum with the cleaning bag outside the house, or vacuum with a HEPA filter or double bag.
- Avoid Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) which can come from new carpets, particle board, furniture, and fresh paint.

**More information:**
- [www.health.utah.gov/asthma](http://www.health.utah.gov/asthma)
- [www.health.utah.gov/enviroepi](http://www.health.utah.gov/enviroepi)
- [www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/healthyhomes](http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/healthyhomes)
- [www.epa.gov/asthma/triggers](http://www.epa.gov/asthma/triggers)

**Sources**
- National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute Guidelines for Diagnosis and Management of Asthma (EPR-3)
- Environmental Protection Agency

*Utah communities working together to improve the quality of life for people with asthma.*