

Act Now Against Asthma

Parent Information for Children Who Have Asthma

Asthma is a serious lung disease. During an asthma attack, the airways get narrow, making it difficult to breathe. Symptoms of asthma include wheezing, shortness of breath, and coughing.

If you have asthma or a child with asthma, you are not alone. About 17 million Americans have asthma. Asthma is the leading cause of long-term illness in children.

The air that children breathe can make a difference. Asthma may be triggered by allergens and irritants that are common in homes. Help your child breathe easier: consult a doctor and reduce asthma triggers in your home.

Triggers are things in your child's environment that may cause them to have asthma attack such as second-hand smoke or dust mites. Below are some examples of Asthma triggers:

- **Second-Hand Smoke** from any type of tobacco. Choose not to smoke in your home or car and do not allow others to do so either.

- **Dust mites** are too small to be seen but are found in every home. Dust mites live in mattresses, pillows, carpets, fabric-covered furniture, bedcovers, clothes, and stuffed toys. You can control them by:
 - o Washing your sheets, blankets, stuffed toys in hot water once a week.
 - o Cover mattresses and pillows in dust-proof (allergen-impermeable) zippered covers.

- **Pets:** Your pet's skin flakes, urine, and saliva can be asthma triggers. Keep your pets:
 - o Out of the bedroom and other sleeping areas at all times, and keep the door closed.
 - o Away from fabric-covered furniture, carpets, and stuffed toys.

- **Molds** grow on damp materials. If mold is a problem in your home:
 - o Wash mold off hard surfaces and dry completely.
 - o Fix leaky plumbing or other sources of water.

- **Pests:** Droppings or body parts of pests such as cockroaches or rodents can be asthma triggers. You can control asthma symptoms by:
 - o Not leaving food or garbage out.
 - o Storing food in airtight containers.

House dust may also contain asthma triggers. Remove dust often with a damp cloth, and vacuum carpet and fabric-covered furniture to reduce dust build-up. Allergic people should leave the area being vacuumed.

Not all of the asthma triggers addressed in this brochure affect every person with asthma and not all asthma triggers are listed here. For more information, contact Linda Stewart of Healthy Homes University at 517-335-8867. This program is free and they will inspect your home and install products to help prevent injuries and reduce home triggers affecting a child's asthma or other respiratory illness.

Download an application for the Healthy Homes University Program at http://www.mich.gov/documents/HHU_Application_147414_7.pdf , or see a Healthy Homes program flyer at <http://www.cacvoices.org/birthtofive/Articles/huuflyer>

To increase awareness about the importance of early childhood in our community, each month the Ingham Great Start Collaborative will distribute articles and brochures on topics essential to our children's early childhood development, education, and health.

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– Furnished by Ingham County Great Start (www.inghamgreatstart.org)