



# Greater Lowell Asthma Coalition Newsletter

The Lowell Asthma Coalition envisions healthy communities for all where asthma is reduced and well managed.

Healthy Homes Issue Spring 2016

## WHAT YOU CAN DO TO AVOID TRIGGERING AN ASTHMA ATTACK WHILE OUTSIDE

With the upcoming season change, spring brings way to many different allergens that you were not exposed to during the

winter. With warming weather, everyone is beginning to enjoy their time outside, breathing in fresh air. In 2012, 17.6 million adults and 6.6 million children had hay fever, an allergy caused by pollen or dust in which the mucus membranes of the eyes and nose are inflamed, causing a runny nose and watery eyes. Worldwide, allergic rhinitis, which is similar to hay fever, affects between 10 percent and 30 percent of the population. If you find yourself suffering from any symptoms of allergies during the spring, be sure to work with a doctor to identify triggers and develop a treatment plan that includes ways to reduce exposures to your asthma triggers.

### Pollen Allergies

Pollen is one of the most common seasonal allergies. Pollen allergies are often referred to as hay fever or seasonal allergic rhinitis. Each spring, plants release pollen to fertilize other plants. Trees, weeds and grasses make small, light and dry pollen grains that travel by wind. Ragweed is the main cause of weed allergies. Birch, cedar and oak trees produce highly allergenic pollen. Symptoms of pollen allergies include: runny nose, sneezing, itchy nose, eyes, ears or mouth, stuffy nose, red eyes and swelling around the eyes.

### Natural Treatment for Your Seasonal Allergies

With spring right around the corner, warming weather makes us think about more holistic approaches to lessening our allergy symptoms. When you think of spring, don't you just want to go for a walk outside, eat more fruits and vegetables and overall live a more active and healthier lifestyle? There are many ways in which you can naturally



treat your seasonable allergies. These include eating a moderately low-fat, high-complex-

carbohydrate diet, drinking more water and eliminating alcohol, caffeine and other unhealthy choices from your diet. Taking necessary supplements, vitamins, and minerals can help with a number of symptoms. Herbal medicines, homeopathy, hydrotherapy, and acupuncture are all recommended by Naturopathic Physicians. When you're at your local drug store looking for some expensive over the counter medicines, refer back to the link below and try out some tips from Naturopathic Physicians.

<http://www.naturopathic.org/content.asp?contentid=117>

**Greater Lowell Asthma Coalition**

**Phone : 978-934-4682**

**Web : [www.greaterlowellhealthalliance.org](http://www.greaterlowellhealthalliance.org)**

Explore the many resources available about asthma: [American Lung Association](http://www.AmericanLungAssociation.org), [Noattacks.org](http://www.Noattacks.org), [Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\)](http://www.EnvironmentalProtectionAgency.gov), [Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America New England Chapter](http://www.AsthmaandAllergyFoundation.org), [Allergy and Asthma Network Mothers of Asthmatics](http://www.AllergyandAsthmaNetwork.org), [American Academy of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology](http://www.AmericanAcademyofAllergy.org), [Asthma Action America](http://www.AsthmaActionAmerica.org), [New England Asthma Regional Council \(ARC\)](http://www.NewEnglandAsthmaRegionalCouncil.org) For statistics on asthma and other environmental issues in Massachusetts, visit the [Massachusetts Environmental Public Health Tracking website](http://www.MassachusettsEnvironmentalPublicHealthTracking.com).



Most people with asthma experience their first symptoms at a young age. But asthma can develop for

anyone at any age. It is not uncommon for adults in their 70s or 80s to develop asthma symptoms for the first time. When asthma does occur at a later age, the symptoms are much like those experienced by anyone else. Asthma creates a much greater risk for older adults because they are more likely to develop respiratory failure as a result of the asthma, even during mild episodes of symptoms. Older patients with mild asthma symptoms can have the same level of breathing difficulty as younger asthma patients experiencing a severe asthma episode. Unlike asthma in younger persons, asthma in older adults rarely goes into remission. Instead, asthma is more likely to remain a potentially serious, and many times, a disabling disease.

### Laundry

Eliminate soap residue by adding 1 cup of white vinegar to the final rinse. Vinegar also breaks down uric acid, so adding 1 cup vinegar to the rinse water is especially good for babies' clothes.

DO NOT USE VINEGAR IF YOU ADD CHLORINE BLEACH TO YOUR RINSE WATER. IT WILL PRODUCE HARMFUL VAPORS.

To make your clothes feel soft and smell fresh add 1/4 to 1/2 cup baking soda per wash load. You can cut the amount of chlorine bleach used in your wash by half when you add 1/2 cup baking soda to top loading machines or 1/4 cup to front loaders.

For additional recipes, go to the Pioneer Valley Asthma Coalition's ["Safe Cleaning for People with Asthma"](#)

The Lowell Asthma Coalition seeks to reduce the burden of asthma in all Lowell communities by focusing on minimizing the disproportionate impact of asthma in racial/ethnic and low-income populations, promoting asthma awareness and disease prevention, expanding and improving the quality of asthma education, management, and services, mobilizing existing capacities and partnerships between all community stakeholders to share resources, achieve a unified message, and advocate for system and policy changes.

### TIPS for Green Cleaning

Everyone undergoes at least one type of spring cleaning every year. In order to make sure that you are avoiding harm to yourself or your family, follow some of these tips to make your spring cleaning as healthy as possible.

- **Less is more:** Dilute your cleaning supplies according to instructions and use only what's needed to get the job done.
- **Open the window:** Clean with windows and doors open so you don't trap air pollution inside your home.
- **Use gloves and other precautions:** Cleaning chemicals may harm or penetrate skin and eyes -- check warning labels.
- **Keep kids away:** Children are more vulnerable to toxic chemicals. If they like to help, let them clean with soap and water, not toxic cleaners.
- **Avoid "antibacterial":** If your family is generally healthy, there's no need to use potentially toxic "antibacterial" products, according to the American Medical Association. Wash your hands with plain soap and water.
- **Don't be fooled by labels -- buy certified green products:** Label claims aren't always true. Cleaning supplies certified by Green Seal or EcoLogo meet green standards.
- **Try natural alternatives:** Experiment with non-toxic options like vinegar (great for windows when diluted with a little water -- wipe with old newspaper or rags) and baking soda (mix with water to form a paste for scrubbing).
- **Skip the biggest hazards:** Avoid air fresheners, use a baking soda and water paste to clean the oven and tackle toilet stains, and use a mechanical snake to unclog the drain.
- **Dispose of your old toxics safely:** Don't pour cleaning supplies down the drain -- some of the ingredients can harm wildlife as well as people. Drop them off at your local hazardous waste facility.
- Refer to the link below for additional information.

<http://www.ewg.org>

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