



Greater Lowell Asthma Coalition Newsletter

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

Healthy Homes Issue Fall/Winter 2015

THE ASTHMA SAFE HOME: WHAT YOU CAN DO TO AVOID TRIGGERING AN ATTACK

Americans spend up to 90 percent of their time indoors. Indoor allergens and irritants play a significant role in triggering asthma

attacks. Triggers are things that can cause asthma symptoms, an episode or attack or make asthma worse. If you have asthma, you may react to just one trigger or you may find that several things act as triggers. 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.

About Secondhand Smoke and Asthma

Secondhand smoke is the smoke from a cigarette, cigar or pipe, and the smoke exhaled by a smoker. Secondhand smoke contains more than 4,000 substances, including several compounds that cause cancer.

Secondhand smoke can trigger asthma episodes and increase the severity of attacks. Secondhand smoke is also a risk factor for new cases of asthma in preschool-aged children. Children's developing bodies make them more susceptible to the effects of secondhand smoke and, due to their small size, they breathe more rapidly than adults, thereby taking in more secondhand smoke. Children receiving high doses of secondhand smoke, such as those with smoking parents, run the greatest relative risk of experiencing damaging health effects.

About Pets and Asthma

Proteins in your pet's skin flakes, urine, feces, saliva and hair can trigger asthma. Dogs, cats, rodents (including hamsters and guinea pigs) and other warm-blooded mammals can trigger asthma in individuals with an allergy to animal dander.



The most effective method to control animal allergens in the home is to not allow animals in the

home. If you remove an animal from the home, it is important to thoroughly clean the floors, walls, carpets and upholstered furniture. If you decide not to remove the pet, don't allow it in the asthmatic child's bedroom.

About Outdoor Air Pollution and Asthma

Outdoor air pollution is caused by small particles and ground level ozone that comes from car exhaust, smoke, road dust and factory emissions. Outdoor air quality is also affected by pollen from plants, crops and weeds. Particle pollution can be high any time of year and are higher near busy roads and where people burn wood. For more information, go to EPA Asthma [Resources](#) and Publications.

For more information on smoke free housing go to: <http://www.phaionline.org/projects/tobacco-control/smoke-free-homes>

Greater Lowell Asthma Coalition

Phone : 978-934-4682

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Explore the many resources available about asthma: [American Lung Association](#), [Noattacks.org](#), [Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\)](#), [www.asthmaandallergies.org](#), [Allergy and Asthma Network Mothers of Asthmatics](#), [American Academy of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology](#), [Asthma Action America](#), [New England Asthma Regional Council \(ARC\)](#). For statistics on asthma and other environmental issues in Massachusetts, visit the [Massachusetts Environmental Public Health Tracking website](#).

Safe Cleaning Tips for People with Asthma

Cleaning with non-toxic cleaners is a great way to both clean your home and manage asthma.

Holiday tips for an Asthma Safe Home

If a live evergreen tree is a tradition you cannot live without, the following tips should help make this

AVOID BLEACH!!

Did you know that Bleach is hazardous and can trigger asthma attacks? For many things, soap and water cleans just fine.

- Clean the house when the person with asthma is NOT home, if possible!
- If liquid castile soap is unavailable, Murphy's Soap is a great substitute.
- Use microfiber cloths for more effective cleaning.

All-Purpose Cleaner

1 ⅓ cup baking soda
½ cup liquid castile soap
½ cup water
2 tablespoons vinegar
16-oz bottle with flip cap Mix baking soda and liquid soap in a bowl.



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.

year's tree a treasure rather than trouble. Wipe the trunk thoroughly with a solution of luke warm water and diluted bleach (1 part bleach to 20 parts water) to

eliminate any mold. Some evergreens, particularly junipers and cedar, may be pollinating even in winter look for a yellowish tinge on



the trunk and needles. Before bringing the tree inside, use a leaf blower (in a well-ventilated area away from the house or garage) to remove visible pollen grains.

Artificial Christmas trees are suitable substitutes for live trees as long as they're not coated with sprayed-on "snow." Such additions (including pine-scented sprays or oils) can aggravate asthmatic or allergic symptoms in some people.

When visiting family or friends, be prepared for possible reactions to everything, from pets to food to perfume. Never leave home without the appropriate medication(s), equipment, and a written action plan so that the proper steps can be taken in case of an emergency.

Limit (or eliminate) scented candles, potpourri, air fresheners, plant arrangements and holiday baking with strong odors that can cause discomfort for people with asthma. For more holiday tips go to <http://www.aafa.org/display.cfm?id=9&sub=20&cont=382>



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