



Lifestyles for Asthma

What's triggering your asthma?

If you have asthma, you have triggers. It may be really obvious when you come into contact with one.

It's important to know what your asthma triggers are and learn ways to control them,

especially the indoor ones, as the weather gets colder and we spend more time inside.

Check the list of triggers below and learn about ways you can improve the quality of your indoor air.

Trigger	Tips to help
Mold	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep humidity in the home between 30 percent and 50 percent. • Use exhaust fans in the kitchen and bathroom. • Vent clothes dryers to the outside. • Use a dehumidifier in the basement. Clean condensation pan often. • Watch for and repair water leaks.
Dust mites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wash bedding weekly in hot water. • Cover mattress and pillow in airtight, allergy-proof covers. • Freeze stuffed toys overnight each week. • Dust the bedroom, including damp-wiping the mattress cover weekly.
Pets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not have warm-blooded pets in the home. If you must have a pet, wash the pet every week, and don't let the pet sleep in the bedroom. • Avoid homes that have pets.
Tobacco smoke	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage all smokers in your home to quit. • Do not smoke in the car, house or bedroom or allow others to do so. • Avoid second-hand smoke, and ask to sit in the nonsmoking section.
Chemicals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not use room deodorizer or potpourri. • Use unscented detergent, personal care products and cleaning supplies. • Stay out of the house when it is being painted. • Store chemicals carefully away from ventilation sources, and follow the label directions.
Cockroaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Store food in airtight containers. • Keep food cleaned up from countertops, cupboards, toasters and other surfaces. • Keep floors clean. • Use poison baits or traps rather than spray pesticides.

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continued from previous page

Trigger	Tips to help
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make sure woodstove doors and vents fit tightly.• Do not use bedding and clothes made with feathers or down.• Do not bring flowers or plants into the house.• Avoid using appliances such as space heaters.• Maintain heating and air conditioning systems — changing or cleaning filters, following label instructions.

Source: Asthma Initiative of Michigan for Healthy Lungs

Think about your drink

The holidays are just around the corner and the key to a safe celebration is drinking in moderation. For most people, this means no more than one drink a day for women, and no more than two drinks a day for men.

Resist the pressure to drink at each event. If you find that you have trouble controlling your alcohol use during the holidays, or any other time, seek help. Behavioral health care is available for conditions that cause emotional or mental distress. To reach the Behavioral Health Services department, call the number on the back of your ID card.

Planning on throwing a holiday party? Make your event a safe one by following these tips:

- Don't make alcohol the main focus of the celebration. Have music, dancing, games, food and conversation.
- Serve an attractive selection of nonalcoholic beverages. Offer coffee, tea, pop, cider, fruit punch, juice or flavored water.
- Appoint a bartender to monitor guests' drinking and serve measured drinks. Instruct them not to serve anyone who seems to have had too much or who is younger than 21.
- Stop serving alcohol at least one hour before the party ends.
- Do not let anyone drive drunk. Arrange for a ride with a sober driver.

Stay healthy this flu season

The best way to prevent the flu is to get a flu shot each fall. About two weeks after the shot, antibodies develop to protect you against the influenza virus.

You can also protect yourself during the flu season by:

- Avoiding people who are ill
- Covering your mouth and nose when you sneeze or cough
- Washing your hands often
- Using hand sanitizers when soap and water are not available
- Keeping your hands away from your face and mouth
- Reminding your children or others who live with you to practice healthy habits
- Getting a flu shot at your doctor's office (Copayments and deductibles may apply.)
- Getting a pneumococcal shot, especially if you're older than 65. Pneumococcal disease is an infection that can affect your lungs, brain and blood.

Symptoms of the flu:

- High fever
- Headache
- Tiredness
- Dry cough
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Muscle aches
- Stomach symptoms (more common in children)

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



Don't let the holidays get you down

Holidays are times for celebration with family and friends, but for many people this time of year can be stressful, even depressing.

Symptoms of the holiday blues include:


- Trouble sleeping
- Lack of interest in activities that usually make you happy
- Crying for no reason
- Feeling hopeless or worthless

Holiday depression often begins around Thanksgiving and lasts to the new year. In most instances, medication is not needed. Keeping stress in check helps avoid holiday depression.

Do your best to avoid the stress:

- Set realistic goals. Make a list of what is important to you. Learn to say "no" if you can't meet a request.
- Enjoy the present and forget the past. Create new holiday traditions.
- Try to get along with your family. This is not the time to resolve family problems.
- Volunteer to help others. Organizations need people to visit the sick, deliver food and serve holiday meals.
- Enjoy holiday activities such as building a snowman, ice skating, sledding, caroling and looking at holiday lights and decorations.
- Eat healthy. Alcohol and sugar cause fatigue and irritability. If you drink, do it in moderation.
- Excessive drinking doesn't solve problems and makes you feel worse.
- Avoid spending too much on gifts or entertaining. Set a budget and follow it. Money worries cause stress.
- Get enough sleep so you have the energy to cope with holiday demands.
- Make time to relax by yourself. Have fun doing activities you enjoy. Try doing something new.
- Stay focused on positive things. Surround yourself with supportive, caring people who make you feel good.

Source: Health A to Z



Checkups

Have you had the following screenings, exams and shots within the last year?

- Asthma Action Plan update
- Review quick-relief medicine
- Review long-term control medicine
- PFT (pulmonary function test)
- Flu shot
- Take the health risk appraisal.

These are general suggestions. Check with your primary care physician about how often you need these services.

- Also, check with you doctor to see if your pneumonia shot is up to date.



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