



Asthma Triggers

The following factors can cause asthma symptoms and should be reduced as much as possible.

1. **Allergens** (dust mites, animals, molds, pollens, cockroaches). Interventions include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - a. Enclose all pillows and mattresses in allergy-free covers*.
 - b. Avoid lying down on upholstered furniture.
 - c. Keep the bedroom quiet for one hour before bedtime.
 - d. Avoid humidifiers
 - e. Wash all bedding covers at least monthly. Blankets are preferred over comforters.
 - f. Always change clothes before lying in bed. Never wear clothes worn outdoors or after contact with animals onto the bed.
 - g. Vacuum one to two times per week. Leave the room for one hour after cleaning/vacuuming.
 - h. Optimally, if animal allergic, the animal should find another home. If in the home, wash or wipe the animal twice per week and never let animal in the bedroom.
 - i. Drive with windows closed and air conditioning on re circulated air.
 - j. Keep windows closed sunrise to 10 a.m., and when it is windy.
 - k. Carpets can be removed; tannic acid can be used to help dust mites/animal exposure; box spring can be wrapped in an allergy cover; air conditioning should be used.
2. **Respiratory infections/colds/flu:** It is critical that medicines are started/increased at the first sign of a cold as prescribed by your doctor. Good and frequent hand washing is important, especially before eating. Flu shots are essential every year.
3. **Inhaled irritants:** Smoke, fumes, sprays, perfumes, powders, cleaning fluids and cooking odors, including occupational exposures, need to be minimized. Stay indoors as much as possible on high pollution/"Spare the Air" days.
4. **Exercise:** The ability to exercise is essential for all asthmatics, but exercise needs to be avoided with asthma flares. Inhaler use, such as albuterol, before exercise can be very helpful. Ask your doctor about this.
5. **Stress/anxiety:** Stress can actually aggravate asthma or mimic asthma. Using a peak flow meter can help tell how well you are breathing.
6. **Medication:** For some people, asthma may be triggered by aspirin, ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil), naproxen (Aleve), medicine for high blood pressure and irregular heart beats.

7. **Foods:** Avoid known food allergies. Foods containing sulfites, especially wine/beer and dried fruit, and some other processed foods can sometimes trigger asthma.
8. **Acid Reflux (GERD):** You can have GERD without having heartburn, and this can trigger your asthma. Other symptoms of GERD include cough, wheeze, frequent throat clearing and/or hoarseness due to excess mucous in the airway. Ask your doctor about this.

**Cover sources: Mission: Allergy at missionallergy.com, 877-662-5537, Allergy Control Products at allergycontrol.com, 800-422-3878, or other companies.*