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# Beat Asthma Triggers on Your Own Home Turf

Maine Department of Health and Human Services

Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention

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## Save Money

### Try These Cleaning Recipes!

You can include these ingredients in your regular grocery list.

#### ALL-PURPOSE SPRAY CLEANER

2 tablespoons baking soda

OR

1/2 teaspoon washing soda, such as Borax

ADD:

2 cups hot tap water

A dime-sized droplet of liquid dish soap

Combine the ingredients in a spray bottle and shake until the baking soda has dissolved. Apply and wipe off with a rag or a cellulose sponge.

#### FURNITURE POLISH

1/2 cup white distilled vinegar

1/4 cup olive oil

2 teaspoons lemon juice

Shake well before using. Dip a clean, dry cloth into the polish and rub wood in the direction of the grain. Use a soft brush to work the polish into corners or tight spaces. To remove water spots, rub a small amount of toothpaste into the area. Refrigerate remaining liquid after use.



**WIND POWER** This brochure is printed on 100% recycled paper manufactured using wind-generated electricity. Wind energy produces no air pollution that could trigger asthma attacks.



Produced by the  
**Homes Workgroup** of the **Maine Asthma Council**  
in collaboration with the  
**Maine Asthma Program.**

For more information about asthma contact:

[www.mainepublichealth.gov](http://www.mainepublichealth.gov)

**Maine Asthma Prevention and Control**

**207-287-3041**



John E. Baldacci, Governor      Brenda M. Harvey, Commissioner



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We Are DHHS.*

09/09

Beat  
asthma triggers  
on your own  
home turf.



Take the  
**Home Quiz**  
to find out how!

Maine Asthma  
COUNCIL  
HOMES WORKGROUP



# Take the Home Quiz:

## Secondhand Smoke

Do you or others smoke in your home?  Yes  No  Sometimes

## Chemicals and Products

Are products with strong odors such as cleaners, candles and incense used in your home?  Yes  No  Sometimes

## Heating and Cooling

Do you heat or cook with gas?  Yes  No  Sometimes

Do you heat your home with wood?  Yes  No  Sometimes

Does your heating or cooling system use filters?  Yes  No  Not sure

## Dust

Do you sleep with a pillow cover and a mattress cover for your bed?  Yes  No  Not sure

Do you have carpets, rugs and/or window coverings in your home?  Yes  No  Sometimes

## Water Damage and Mold

Do you use kitchen or bath fans?  Yes  No  Sometimes

Do you see signs of water damage, moisture, or leaks?  Yes  No  Not sure

Do you use a humidifier?  Yes  No  Sometimes

Do you see or smell any mold or mildew?  Yes  No  Not sure

## Pets and Pests

Do you have pets in the house or do other people visit with their pets?  Yes  No  Sometimes

Do you see signs of cockroaches, mice or rats in your home?  Yes  No  Not sure

Are there food crumbs or opened, unsealed foods present in your home?  Yes  No  Not sure

## Answers:

Did you answer 'yes' 'sometimes' 'or' 'not sure' to any of the questions above?

Then you can improve your home environment!

Based on your answers, see below for simple steps you can take and resources you can use for dealing with home-based asthma triggers.

## Simple Steps You Can Take:

**Secondhand Smoke:** Tobacco smoke is a major asthma trigger. Do not allow people to smoke in your home. If you want to quit smoking, call the free Maine Tobacco HelpLine 1-800-207-1230 for help. [www.smokefreeforme.org](http://www.smokefreeforme.org)

**Chemicals and Products:** Limit use of candles, incense and strong smelling cleaning products. Try making your own cleaning products. (See the recipes included in this brochure.) If you have to use cleaners with a strong odor open a window. [www.epa.gov/iaq/voc.html](http://www.epa.gov/iaq/voc.html)

**Heating and Cooling:** All heating and cooling systems and appliances should be cleaned and checked annually. Replace filters every three months. Vent all systems and appliances to the outside or open a window to let in fresh air. Burn only dry hardwoods in wood stoves. [www.maineindoorair.org](http://www.maineindoorair.org)

**Dust:** If you are allergic to dust, make sure to use a dust proof cover marked "allergy safe" on your pillow and mattress. Wash your sheets once a week and your bedspreads, quilts and blankets often. Vacuum any rugs or carpets at least once a week. Wash curtains and drapes often. Dust blinds, shades and windowsills monthly with a damp cloth. [www.everydayhealth.com/asthma](http://www.everydayhealth.com/asthma)

**Water Damage and Mold:** Use kitchen and bath fans when cooking and showering. Clean and dry any leaks and spills immediately. Maintain the humidity in your home. Do not use a humidifier unless medically recommended. Use a dehumidifier to keep things dry. Clean surface mold with detergent and water. Wipe dry. [www.maineindoorair.org](http://www.maineindoorair.org)

## **Pets and Pests:**

Do not allow pets in the sleeping area of anyone who has asthma. People with asthma can be sensitive to cockroaches and rodents. Use boric acid or traps to kill pests and then wash all surfaces where pests have been. Clean up crumbs and spills right away. Store food in sealed containers. Take the trash out often. [www.thinkfirstspraylast.org](http://www.thinkfirstspraylast.org)

 **It's Easy!** 