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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For more information about asthma contact:
www.mainepublichealth.gov
Maine Access Prevention and Control
207-287-3041

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

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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.

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.

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.

Try These Cleaning Recipes!
You can include these ingredients in your regular grocery list.

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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

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.smokefreeme.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

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

Simple Steps You Can Take:

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

Do you use a humidifier?
- Yes
- No
- Not sure

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

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 window sills monthly with a damp cloth.

www.everydayhealth.com/asthma

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
- Not sure

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

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

Dust: Are you allergic to dust? Do you have pets in the house or do other people visit with their pets?
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

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

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 borax 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

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.

It’s Easy!