

ASTHMA DATA TO ACTION

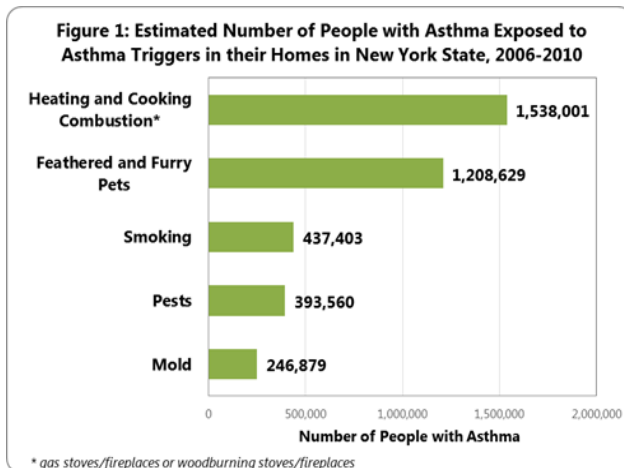
To improve the health of people with asthma, multiple approaches should be used to reduce asthma triggers (allergens and irritants) in the home.

The Problem

Homes can be a major source of asthma triggers which can make asthma worse. Worsening asthma symptoms contribute annually to 255 deaths¹, nearly 165,000 emergency department visits, more than 38,000 hospitalizations² and approximately 11 million days when people are unable to work, go to school or carry out their usual activities in New York State.³

A substantial number of New Yorkers are exposed to asthma triggers in their homes (Figure 1). In fact, **nine out of 10 people with asthma have at least one asthma trigger present in their home.**³

Tobacco smoke is one of the most common asthma triggers⁴ and is present in 21% of homes with people who have asthma.³



The Response

Home-based multi-trigger, multi-component interventions with an environmental focus can reduce exposure to multiple indoor asthma triggers. Interventions can involve home visits by trained personnel to assess the home environment, change the indoor environment to reduce exposure to asthma triggers, and educate about the home environment.^{5,6}

What Can Be Done

State Leaders Can:

Promote policies to increase access to evidence-based asthma interventions with an environmental focus, such as **reimbursement for home-based multi-trigger, multi-component asthma interventions.**

Promote policies to improve indoor air quality, such as **smoking restrictions in multi-unit housing.**

Communities Can:

Raise awareness about the home environment's impact on the health of people with asthma and measures to reduce asthma triggers in the home.

Enforce building codes to promote the health and safety of residents.

Health Care Providers Can:

Assess patients' exposure to potential asthma triggers.

Provide education and **refer patients to providers of home-based multi-trigger, multi-component asthma interventions** to reduce exposure to asthma triggers.

Routinely **encourage patients and family members to stop smoking**; strongly advise against smoking indoors; initiate and refer to smoking cessation interventions.

Update patients' Asthma Action Plans to include recommendations on how to control known asthma triggers.

Health Insurers Can:

Provide reimbursement for evidence-based asthma interventions, such as home-based multi-trigger, multi-component interventions with an environmental focus.

Provide care coordination services for individuals with poorly controlled asthma.

Provide asthma self-management education that includes information on avoiding environmental triggers.

People with Asthma Can:

Work with health care providers to identify asthma triggers.

Avoid asthma triggers by taking multiple steps to reduce triggers in the home.

Prohibit smoking in the home. Family members living with children with asthma should not smoke, or if they do, smoke only outdoors and not in their cars.

Avoid all smoke and substances with strong odors.

Keep pests such as cockroaches, mice, and rats out of the home.

Control moisture sources to prevent mold growth. Remove mold from the home.

Remove dust from inside the home.

Make sure the home is well ventilated. Use exhaust fans that vent to the outside.

Keep feathered and furry pets out of the home, or at least out of sleeping areas.

Homeowners & Landlords Can:

Follow local building codes.

Prohibit smoking inside all housing units.

Keep all housing units in good repair and properly ventilated to minimize water leaks, moisture build-up, pest infestation, and other sources of asthma triggers.

Remediate mold and pest issues promptly.

Resources

Healthy Homes Specialist Credential and Preparation Course
(www.neha.org/credential/HHS/)

Asthma Trigger Tracker and Key Questions
(www.health.ny.gov/publications/4990/asthma_triggers_tracking.pdf)

Healthy Neighborhoods Program
(www.health.ny.gov/environmental/indoor/healthy_neighborhoods)

NYS Smokers' Quitline
1-866-NYQUITS (1-866-697-8487)
(www.nysmokefree.com)

Information about Mold and Mold Cleanup:
(www.health.ny.gov/publications/7287/)

Pesticide Treatments and Integrated Pest Management in Homes
(www.nysipm.cornell.edu/buildings/default.asp)

NYS Attorney General Office, Tenant and Landlord Rights Information Helpline: 1-800-771-7755
(www.ag.ny.gov/sites/default/files/pdfs/publications/Tenant_Rights_2011.pdf)

References

- 1) New York State Department of Health, Vital Statistics data, 2011.
- 2) New York State Department of Health, Bureau of Biometrics, Statewide Planning and Research Cooperative System (SPARCS) data, 2009-2011.
- 3) New York State Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, Asthma Call-Back Survey data, 2006-2010.
- 4) Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Asthma: Important Asthma Triggers [last updated 2012 August]. *CDC Community Guide*. The Community Guide - Asthma Control.
- 5) *The Community Guide to Preventive Services*. 2008. Available at: www.thecommunityguide.org/asthma/index.html [Accessed August 6, 2013],
- 6) Largo, TW, Borgialli, M, Wisinski, CL, Wahl, RL, Priem, WF. Healthy Homes University: A Home-Based Environmental Intervention and Education Program for Families with Pediatric Asthma in Michigan. *Public Health Reports*. 2011;126 (Suppl):14-26.