

What Doctors & Other Health Professionals Said

Knowing and managing triggers is a key part of asthma management.

There are many ways to help a person discover his or her own personal triggers.

Log sheets or diaries used along with a peak flow meter can monitor how triggers and medications affect asthma.

Doctors and health professionals should talk about asthma triggers as a general concern, as well as those that are specific to each individual patient.

Once a person knows his or her triggers, it is possible to develop strategies to avoid them. Recommendations have to be practical.

Asthma Resources

New York State Department of Health
(800) 458-1158
www.nyhealth.gov

Allergy and Asthma Network/Mothers of Asthmatics, Inc.
(800) 878-4403
www.aanma.org

Allergy and Asthma Foundation of America
(800) 7-ASTHMA
www.aafa.org

American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology
(800) 822-2762
www.aaaai.org/patients/publicedmat/tips/asthmaallergymedications.stm

American Academy of Pediatrics
(800) 433-9016
www.aap.org

American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology
(800) 842-7777
www.acaai.org

American Lung Association
(800) LUNG-USA
www.lungusa.org/site/pp.asp?c=dvLUK900E&b=22581

Institute For Health Care Communication, Inc.
(800) 800-5907
www.healthcare.com

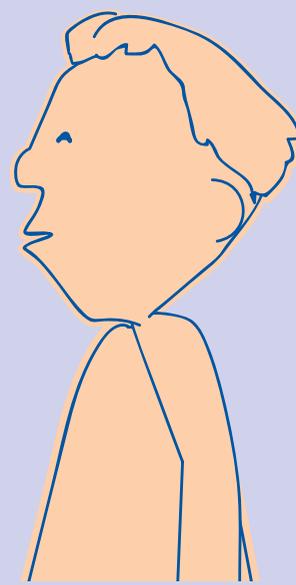
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
(212) 637-3660
www.epa.gov

National Jewish Medical and Research Center
(800) 222-LUNG
www.asthma.nationaljewish.org/disease-info/diseases/asthma/living/environ/index.aspx

National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases
(301) 496-5717
www.niaid.nih.gov



What Asthma Patients & Parents Said



How do I manage my asthma triggers?

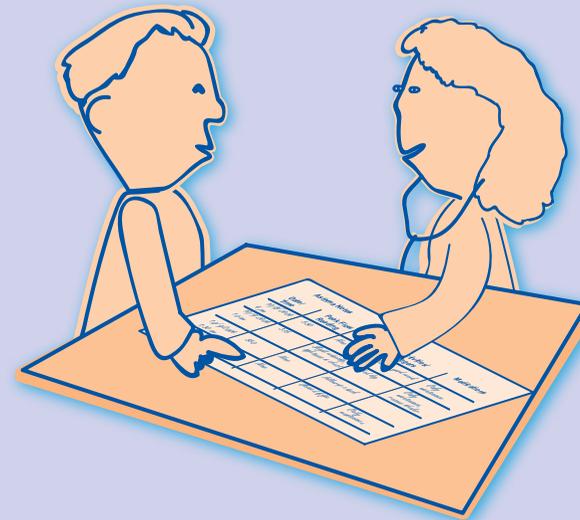
The way I finally figured out what my triggers were was through trial and error.

I have a lot going on. I can try to keep a diary, but I don't see doing it for very long.

My doctor talked to me about triggers that affect many asthma patients, asked me if I smoke or live with people who smoke, and also asked me about allergies and pets.

I'm not going to give away our cat; he's a member of the family.

Environmental Asthma Triggers



indoors



at home



outdoors

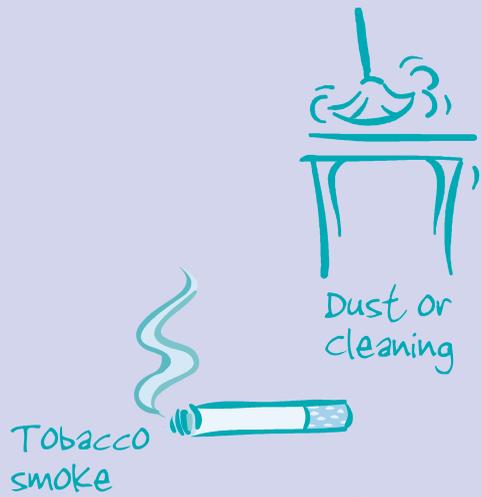
Working Together

We spoke to asthma patients and health professionals (such as physicians, nurses, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, pharmacists and health educators) about important messages for managing asthma. This brochure captures some of the ideas they shared, and is intended for patients and health professionals to use together to improve their partnership in managing asthma.

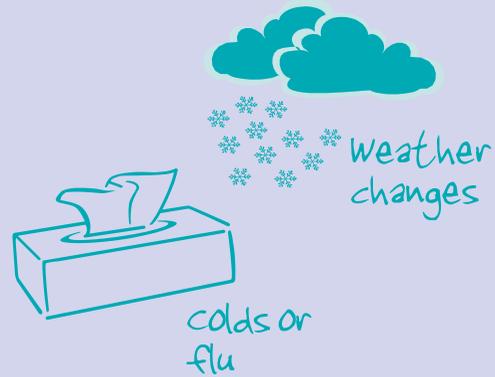


Get a **JUMP** on asthma

Ideas for the Patient and the Health Care Team

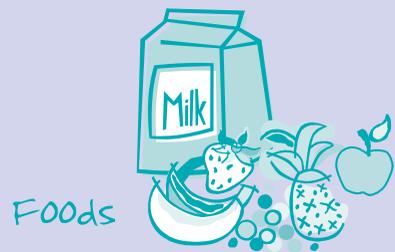


Focus on the triggers or factors in the environment that bring on asthma symptoms. Triggers are different for each person. They can be indoors or outdoors. "Examples of Triggers Reported by Asthma Patients" lists many kinds of triggers that affect people with asthma.



Health professionals and patients should discuss the possible triggers of everyday life – at home, work, school, etc. Allergy testing may be helpful. Make note of activities and locations when asthma symptoms get worse.

Patients can use a log, diary or notebook to track peak flow scores, medications and asthma triggers for about a month or until their asthma is under control. Work out a written asthma action plan that will explain what to do when symptoms get worse. (See "What is an Asthma Action Plan?" in the "Managing Asthma" brochure of this series for more details.)



Explore both general and person-specific triggers. Some common triggers include dust mites and mold, pets, strong odors, cockroaches, cigarette and cigar smoke, viral or sinus infections, emotions, weather changes, pollution, and exercise. (See "Examples of Triggers" for a more extensive list.)



It may be possible to create a "safe haven" or space where triggers are not present. For example, a person whose cat triggers their asthma can keep the cat out of the room where they sleep.

Examples of Triggers Reported by Asthma Patients

Allergens

Pollen from trees, grasses, hay, ragweed
Mold
Animals such as cats, dogs, rabbits, hamsters, gerbils, birds, rats, mice
Dust mites
Insects such as cockroaches
Sensitivity to sulfites, food preservatives, aspirin, or food dyes
Food such as nuts, chocolate, eggs, orange juice, fish, milk, peanut butter

Infections and Medical Problems

Colds, other viruses
Flu
Bronchitis
Tonsillitis
Sinusitis
Coughing
Heartburn
Acid reflux disease

Tobacco Smoke

Cigarettes, cigars, pipes – yours or someone else's

Dust

Cloth-upholstered furniture, bedding, carpets, draperies
Brooms and dusters
Vacuum cleaners without special air filters

Air Pollution

Traffic – idling cars, trucks or buses
Smoke-filled rooms
Woodburning stoves/ fireplaces
Unvented gas/kerosene heaters
Ozone/smog
Nitrogen oxides
Sulfur dioxide

Weather

Cold air
Weather changes
Humidity

Exercise

Especially in cold weather

Nighttime

Lying down
Accumulating mucus

Emotions

Fear
Anger
Frustration
Laughing or crying
Depression
Stress

On The Job

Wood products
Metals/metal fumes
Cotton, flax, hemp
Mold on or in decaying hay; water damaged, or badly cleaned parts of buildings
Chemicals in paints, cleaning products
Dust from wood, flour, latex gloves
Industrial chemicals

Around The House/School

Vapors from cleaning products, paint, paint thinner, liquid chlorine bleach
Sprays from furniture polish, starch, cleaners, room deodorizers
Spray deodorants, perfumes, hair sprays, talcum powder, scented cosmetics
Vapors from furnishings (carpeting, cabinets)
Pesticide sprays
Incense and scented candles
Chalk dust