

Triggers

Asthma Basics #2

Manage
your
environment





The **Asthma Basics Booklet Series** was developed to provide Canadians with asthma, current and accurate information about asthma management. This booklet has been developed and reviewed by experts in the field of asthma care and certified asthma educators. The author, reviewers and sponsors encourage you to discuss this information with your doctor, pharmacist and asthma educator.

The information in this booklet is not intended to substitute for expert medical advice or treatment' it is designed to help you make informed choices. Because each individual is unique, a physician must diagnose conditions and supervise treatments for each individual health problem.

Acknowledgments

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The **Asthma Society of Canada** will review and update this booklet in the future. Your feedback is welcome. Please email your comments to info@asthma.ca

Questions? We have answers

We are the Asthma Society of Canada and we care about your lung health. We provide answers to Canadians so they can breathe easier.

Asthma is a lung condition that can lead to emergency room visits, hospitalizations and sometimes death, but death from well-controlled asthma is rare and preventable. Most people with asthma can have good asthma control. It is just a matter of paying attention to your asthma. Your doctor can provide you with medications to help you control your asthma, but you can also do a lot of things on your own. Making changes to your lifestyle to reduce your exposure to things that trigger your asthma symptoms is a large part of taking control of your asthma.

This booklet is **Step 2** in the Asthma Basics Steps. It will help you identify things in your environment that might trigger your asthma and ways you can avoid them.

This booklet is designed for adults with asthma or parents who have a child with asthma, who are searching for answers to the following questions:

- ≈ What is good asthma control?p.4
- ≈ What is the relationship between allergies and asthma?p.8
- ≈ Common questions and answers about allergies.....p.10
- ≈ What are my allergic triggers?p.12
- ≈ What are my non-allergic triggers?p.14
- ≈ What can I do to avoid my triggers?p.18
- ≈ Are air cleaners and humidifiers helpful?p.20
- ≈ How can I reduce the triggers in my home?p.22
- ≈ What is an asthma diary? How can it help me?.....p.26

Turn the Page
for the Asthma Basic Steps



Asthma basics steps

We developed the Asthma Basics Steps to help you learn about good asthma control. Use these steps to guide your discussions with your doctor, pharmacist and asthma educator.

Step 1 Diagnosis

- Talk to your doctor about your breathing difficulty
- Your doctor confirms you have asthma and may do tests
- Find out about asthma, what it is and how it can be controlled
- This step is discussed in the booklet called **Diagnosis**

Step 2 Triggers

- Find out what makes your asthma worse by keeping a diary and getting allergy tests
- Once you know what your allergic and non-allergic triggers are, you learn how to avoid them
- This step is discussed in this booklet called **Triggers**

Step 3 Medication

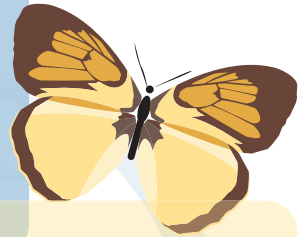
- Your doctor may prescribe Asthma controller medication
- Learn what your medication does and how to take it properly
- Learn how a written action plan can help you manage your asthma
- This step is discussed in the booklet called **Medications**





Step 4 Education

- Learn as much as possible.
Ask your pharmacist, doctor and asthma educator lots of questions
- Read informational materials and visit www.Asthma.ca and 4seasonsofasthma.ca to learn more
- Call the Asthma Society if you need help locating an asthma educator 1-866-787-4050



Step 5 Asthma action plan

- When your asthma is well-controlled, talk to your doctor about your medication needs and any changes in your environment
- Work with your doctor to get a written asthma action plan that you can use for asthma management at home
- Visit www.Asthma.ca for a sample action plan to take to your doctor

Step 6 Ongoing management

- Discuss your asthma every six months with your doctor, even if you are well
- Take lung function tests every year to make sure your asthma is well controlled
- Tell other health care professionals that you have asthma

Follow the Asthma Management Steps to achieve good asthma control



What is well controlled asthma?

Good asthma control

The Asthma Society is committed to helping Canadians with asthma to gain control of their disease. Your asthma is under control when you:

- ≈ Feel okay during and after exercise
- ≈ Do not cough, wheeze or have shortness of breath, on most days
- ≈ Sleep throughout the night without coughing, wheezing or feeling short of breath
- ≈ Do not have any limitations of activity, or absence from work or school because of your asthma
- ≈ Have normal breathing tests
- ≈ Are not needing to use your reliever medication (blue inhaler) twice or less/week, (not including use before exercise)

Take the interactive quiz "*How Are You Feeling Today?*" at www.Asthma.ca. It can help you figure out if your asthma is under good control.



Control your asthma

If your asthma is not under control, it could be because:

- ≈ You are exposed to something in your environment that is triggering your asthma
- ≈ You are not using the right controller medication for you
See the **Medications** booklet
- ≈ You are not using the right inhaler technique
See the **Medications** booklet and visit www.Asthma.ca
- ≈ Something other than asthma is causing your symptoms.
See the **Diagnosis** booklet and talk to your doctor



In this booklet, you will learn how you can change your environment to reduce your exposure to things that make your asthma symptoms worse.



You can **control** your asthma



Control your asthma

You can control your asthma in two ways:

- 1 Avoid your triggers
- 2 Take Asthma controller medication. This is discussed in the booklet called **Asthma Basics Medication**

Triggers are things in your environment that cause the inflammation, or swelling, in your airways. Triggers are everywhere. Avoiding triggers that are under your control will help you be better prepared to deal with the triggers that are more difficult to avoid, like pollen, smog and viruses.

There are two types of triggers: allergic and non-allergic. It is important to find out both your allergic and non-allergic triggers so you can take steps to reduce your exposure to these things that make your asthma worse. Take the time to find out what your triggers are.

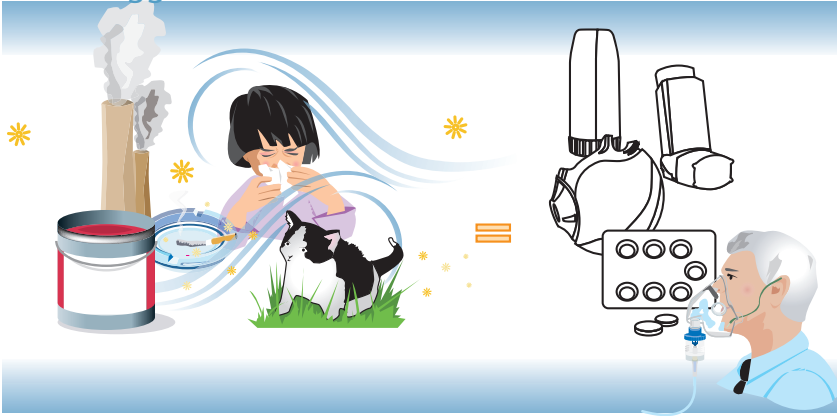
Finding out what your non-allergic triggers are may take some effort and time. Keeping a diary can help you figure out what non-allergic things you are sensitive to. There is a sample diary on page 24.



Determine your **allergic and non-allergic** triggers so you can take steps to avoid them.

More triggers

more medication



Less triggers

less medication



Allergic triggers

Asthma and allergies are related, but they are not the same thing. An allergy is a reaction to a substance that is usually harmless. These substances (allergens) can be inhaled, injected, swallowed or touched. Being exposed to an allergen may cause irritation and swelling in specific areas of the body, such as the nose, eyes, lungs and skin. Allergens, like pollen, animal dander, dust mites and mould can make asthma symptoms worse by increasing the inflammation in the airways and making them more sensitive. The best way to find out if you are allergic to something is to have an allergy assessment done. Talk to your doctor about allergy testing.



Allergens can make asthma symptoms worse

Types of allergic reactions

Eczema

Allergies in infants usually show up as eczema – dry, itchy, red patches of skin.

Rhinitis

Rhinitis is inflammation (swelling) of the lining in the nose. It is caused by exposure to an allergen like ragweed, tree or grass pollen, animal dander, dust mites or mould spores. Common symptoms of allergic rhinitis are itchy nose and throat, runny or stuffy nose, sneezing and ear blockage.

Allergic conjunctivitis is when you have watery, itchy and red eyes. Allergies can be seasonal or may occur throughout the year.



Infant with eczema

Asthma

An allergic reaction in the lungs can cause asthma symptoms. Breathing an allergen into the lungs leads to swelling and irritation in the lining of the airways. This causes coughing, wheezing and shortness of breath. Although allergens are common asthma triggers, many people have asthma symptoms with non-allergic triggers such as smoke, cold air and exercise.

Food allergies

The most common food allergies are to peanuts, nuts, shellfish, fish, eggs, milk and soy. Anaphylaxis is a severe, sometimes life-threatening event that is caused by allergy to some foods (e.g. peanuts), bee stings and certain medications, and requires immediate medical attention.





Allergy questions and answers



Who gets allergies?

No one is born with an allergy, but you can have a genetic tendency to develop one. If both your parents have allergies, you have a 75% chance of also developing them.

What are the common signs of an allergy?

Many people confuse their allergies with having a cold. Colds generally last 7–10 days, and are passed on to others. Allergies are reactions to things that are generally harmless and are not contagious. Frequent ear or sinus infections, dark circles under the eyes, constant runny nose, sneezing and itchy, watery eyes are all signs of an allergic response.

How can I tell if I have allergies?

You can take allergy tests to find out what you are allergic to. Ask your doctor about having allergy tests and what your results mean.

What is an allergy test?

The skin test is the most common type of allergy test. It is a simple test where the doctor or nurse places a small amount of allergen on, or just under, your skin. If you are allergic to a particular allergen, this small area of skin will get red and itch. The larger the affected area, the more sensitive you are to that allergen. The skin test is often used to identify common allergens like dust mites, pet dander, pollen, moulds and foods.

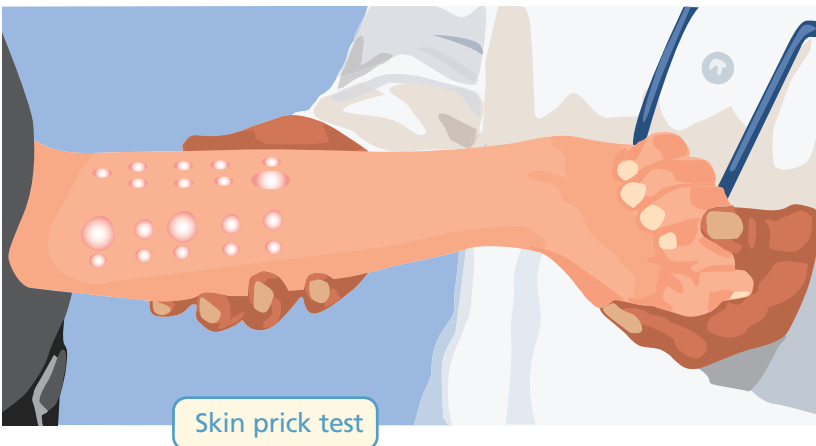
Blood tests can also be used to test for allergies. These are not generally covered by provincial drug plans, but can be important alternatives to the skin test in pregnant women or those with severe skin conditions or on certain medications.

Should I get allergy shots to help my asthma?

Allergy shots, or immunotherapy, are not always recommended for the treatment of asthma. Allergy shots can help allergic rhinitis that is triggered by seasonal pollens, such as ragweed. It is best to avoid allergens that worsen your asthma, but your doctor may recommend allergy shots, especially if a particular allergen is unavoidable.

Do allergy medicines help my asthma?

Allergy medications are not generally used to treat asthma, but they may help some people with asthma who have seasonal allergies. Using allergy medications can keep your nasal passages open, allowing you to breathe through your nose. Breathing through your nose helps filter, warm and humidify the air that you are breathing into your lungs, which may improve your asthma.



Have allergy tests and follow your
doctor's advice to manage your allergies



Allergic triggers

After you have the results of your allergy tests (see page 10), refer to the following chart to learn more about your specific allergic triggers. Exposure to your allergic triggers will cause inflammation in your airways, making your asthma worse.

Dust mites

Positive test result:

Important Information:

Dust mites are tiny insects that live in fibres on carpet, plush furniture, curtains, mattresses, pillows and bedding. They eat flakes of skin and reproduce in warm and humid environments. Their presence can be reduced by following the dust mite avoidance strategies on pages 20 and 21.



Food

Positive test result:

Important Information:

A food allergy may cause skin problems like itching, rashes or hives, or intestinal troubles like abdominal pain, diarrhea or vomiting. Food allergies can also cause anaphylaxis, a dangerous swelling of the airways, shortness of breath or fainting. Get tested for food allergies and ask your doctor how to avoid foods you are allergic to.



Mould

Positive test result:

Important Information: Mould is a type of fungus which produces spores that float in the air. It thrives in humid environments and lives off decaying plants. The air is never free of mould, but you can prevent growth by keeping your house clean and dry all year.



Animal dander (pets)

Positive test result:

Important Information:

Pet allergies are common. Up to 50% of children with asthma have symptoms triggered by pets. People with pet allergies are not allergic to the animal's fur or feathers, but are allergic to the animal's dander (flakes of shed skin), saliva and urine. These pet allergens are very small particles and are in the air even if the animal is not present. Even after getting rid of a pet, the allergen can remain for months on furniture and in the carpets. Animals can also carry pollen and mould into the house from outside on their fur.

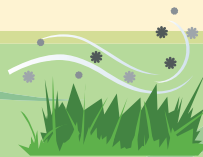
If you do not have a pet, do not get one if you have asthma. If you have a pet and a pet allergy, consider finding a new home for your pet. If you decide to keep the pet even though you are allergic, you will be increasing the severity of your asthma over time. There is no such thing as an allergy-free dog or cat. All furred animals shed dander. Reducing your exposure to pet allergens is the most effective way to help your asthma symptoms.



Pollen

Positive test result:

Important Information: Pollen is carried by the wind on hot, windy days. Tree allergens are most common in the spring, grass pollens in the summer, and ragweed pollens in the fall. You can find out the pollen counts in your region at the Weather Network on television, or online at www.weather.ca. Visit www.Asthma.ca for more information.





Non-allergic triggers

Exposure to allergic triggers will cause inflammation in the airways, making them very sensitive.

Non-allergic triggers are substances that irritate the airway. The irritation is worse if the airway is already inflamed (swollen) and sensitive. Not all things that trigger asthma symptoms are allergens. Common non-allergic triggers are exercise, second-hand tobacco smoke, viral infections, cold air, smog and fumes or odors.

What is the effect of second-hand smoke on lung health?

Second-hand cigarette smoke affects hundreds of thousands of children in Canada. Children under the age of five years who are exposed to cigarette smoke at home are more likely to have breathing problems like colds, sore throats and lung conditions (e.g., bronchitis, bronchiolitis, pneumonia and asthma). They are also likely to have more ear infections.

Second-hand smoke worsens asthma symptoms, so more medication will be needed to control the asthma. Second-hand smoke may even change the function and structure of a child's lungs as the child grows. **Children should not be exposed to second-hand smoke.**



Identify your **non-allergic asthma triggers**.
Use the chart on page 20 to learn how to avoid them.

What is a smog alert?

Smog is a combination of vapors, gases and particles that react to sunlight to produce ozone near the ground.



The particles in the air, along with the ozone, cause lung damage and breathing problems in people with asthma.

The air quality index (AQI) measures the levels of smog in the air. If the AQI is in the "*moderate*" range, you should not exercise outdoors. If the AQI is in the "*poor*" range, you should avoid going outside. Environment Canada issues a "*smog alert*" when the AQI reaches a dangerous level – often on hot summer days during May to September. Check the AQI on the Weather Network on television or online at www.weather.ca.

How can I help to reduce smog?

To reduce smog, you can:

- ≈ Take public transit or car pool to reduce car emissions
- ≈ Avoid idling your car
- ≈ Consider fuel efficiency when you buy a car
- ≈ Avoid using gas-powered machinery like lawn mowers

Should I avoid exercise because of my asthma?

Having asthma does not mean that you have to slow down. If you have any limitations in your ability to exercise because of your asthma, your asthma is probably not being controlled properly. See your doctor about getting your asthma under control. If you have asthma symptoms, check with your doctor or asthma educator before starting a new exercise program.



Non-allergic triggers

Infections (common cold)

Cold and flu viruses are common asthma triggers and are difficult to avoid. Antibiotics will not help asthma attacks caused by colds, but might help if you have a bacterial sinus infection. Frequent hand washing is your best defense against getting a cold. Get a flu shot in the fall. Use your controller medication regularly to help reduce asthma symptoms when you get a cold.

Outdoor air pollution

Outdoor air pollution, or smog, causes inflammation in the nose and the airway so it can worsen asthma symptoms. Stay indoors on high smog days, and do not exercise outdoors. If you have to be outside on high smog days, breathe through your nose. See page 15 for more information.

Weather changes

Weather can affect your asthma. After thunderstorms, there are more asthma allergens in the air. Cold and dry winter air can make breathing difficult. Breathing through your nose on cold days helps warm and humidify the air before it reaches your lungs.

Exercise

Asthma symptoms are often triggered by exercise, especially if asthma is not under control. When exercising there is a tendency to breathe through the mouth instead of the nose. This allows unhumidified and unfiltered air into the lungs. This can trigger asthma symptoms.

Medications

Beta blockers, acetylsalicylic acid (ASA, or Aspirin[®]), certain eye drops and blood pressure medication can cause a severe and sudden asthma attack. Make sure your doctor and pharmacist know that you have asthma so they can decide on the best medication for you. If you have asthma symptoms when you start a new medication, tell your doctor or pharmacist right away.

Hormones

Some women find that their asthma gets worse before their periods, during pregnancy or during menopause. Visit www.Asthma.ca for more information about asthma and pregnancy.

Occupational irritants

Occupational asthma is when something in the work environment causes asthma. A key feature is if asthma symptoms are worse during the work week and improve on days off. Particular professions at risk (and possible irritants) include mill workers and carpenters (wood dust, especially red cedar dust), industrial workers (metal fumes), pharmaceutical workers (drug particles), bakers and farmers (flour and grain), textile workers (cotton dust) and even electrician's and sheet metal workers.

Indoor air pollution

Second-hand cigarette smoke can cause asthma in infants and children. Cigarette smoke increases the number and severity of asthma episodes. Declare your home and car smoke-free zones. Smoking in another part of the house is not enough because toxic chemicals will circulate through the ventilation system to other areas in the house.

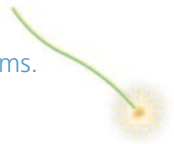
Personal products such as perfume and hairspray can irritate the airway. It is best not to use them. The odors from cleaning and arts & crafts products can also trigger asthma symptoms.



Avoiding your triggers

Find out what your triggers are:

- Have an allergy test done. Write down what you are allergic to and learn how to avoid or reduce your exposure to them
- Use a diary to keep track of your asthma symptoms. Review your diary with your doctor to determine your non-allergic asthma triggers. An example of a diary can be found on page 24



Once you have a clear idea of the things that make your asthma worse, make plans to control these things. Some triggers will be difficult to stay away from (e.g., pollen, air pollution, thunderstorms), but many triggers are avoidable. Start with your own home because you spend a lot of time there and that environment is under your immediate control.

To control your home environment:

- Make your home smoke free
- Monitor the humidity in your home with a hygrometer and keep the level less than 50%. Living in a damp home is likely to make asthma symptoms worse
- Keep your home **very** clean, especially the floor.



Refer to the checklist on pages 20-24 to make changes in your home.

While you are making changes in your home, monitor your asthma daily and take your controller medication. If you have any concerns or questions, talk to your doctor.



Should I move to a different part of the country to avoid my triggers?

Asthma occurs everywhere, so moving generally will not help. Usually your house, not your geographic area, is the most important consideration for people with asthma. The home can contain triggers like old carpets full of pet allergens and dust mites, and mould. But, if there is one particular asthma trigger that is a big problem in your area, moving somewhere where it is low or absent may help.



Canadians spend 90% of their time indoors.
Keeping your home clean will help keep you well.



Indoor Air: Questions & Answers

What is indoor air particulate?

Particles of animal dander, pollen, dust mites, chemical substances, mold spores, bacterial toxins and, importantly, outdoor air particulate matter from traffic and other sources. Some of these particles are small enough to be inhaled into the lungs and can be irritating or toxic. Given the amount of time we spend indoors, our exposure to these airborne particles may be more important than the outdoor air.

Research has shown that when we walk in our homes tiny particles are stirred up from the floor and float in the air. Within an hour, the larger and heavier particles will settle back down to the floor while the smaller particles, that are invisible to the eye, remain in the air. It is these floating particles that are inhaled deep into your lungs that may cause asthma symptoms.

Removing these tiny airborne particles has been shown to help reduce asthma symptoms. One way to reduce the number of particles in the air is to stop them from entering the house in the first place. You can do this by keeping your home smoke-free and have all boots and shoes taken off and left at the door. Another effective way to reduce the number of airborne particles, is to keep the surfaces in your home clean, especially the floor. Most airborne particles will eventually settle onto the floor or carpet, until they are stirred up again. Keeping hardwood or other smooth flooring clean is generally easier than is the case for carpet but cleaning carpet can be effective at reducing exposure if done properly.

What advantages do HEPA vacuums provide?

Typical vacuums only catch larger particles and let the tiny particles pass through the vacuum and back into the air. Using well-designed vacuum cleaners with a high efficiency ("HEPA") filter will help to catch the tiny particles. A regular vacuum is more useful if its vents outside the home. Vacuuming with a cleaner without a HEPA-type filter stirs up the dust, allergens and mold spores in air in your home for many hours.

How effective are air cleaners?

Some air cleaners can remove tiny particles in the air. However, it is still not clear whether air cleaners are useful in helping asthma and

allergy symptoms. Air filters are not the single solution to indoor air quality problems.

There are several types of air cleaners; Ion and ozone generators, mechanical filters and electronic filters. Do not use any air cleaner that produces ozone, a chemical that when breathed in, can worsen asthma symptoms. Electronic air cleaners must be installed and maintained properly or they will make ozone.

Can I claim air filters and cleaners as a medical expense?

You can deduct the cost of certain household equipment such as air filters and cleaners as medical expenses on our personal income tax. You will need a prescription from your doctor. There are some restrictions however. Contact the Canada Revenue Agency at 1-800-959-8281 for more information.

What do I need to know about humidifiers and vaporizers?

Damp homes are bad for lung health, thus humidifiers and vaporizers are not generally recommended. The air in our home may be very dry during the winter months. Before using a humidifier or vaporizer measure the level of humidity using a hygrometer that is properly calibrated. If the humidity is below 30%, and you have very dry skin, frequent nose bleeds and static electricity, you may want to consider using a humidifier. If you use a humidifier, it is important that you continue to monitor the humidity level and shut the unit off when it reaches 45-50%. Remember, too much humidity is not good for your lung health.

If you choose to use a humidifier or vaporizer, it is important to keep the unit very clean. When humidifiers and vaporizers are left with water in them, mould and bacteria can grow. It is very important that these units be cleaned on a daily basis.

What is a hygrometer and where can I buy one?

A hygrometer is a gauge that measures the humidity in your home. You can buy one from most hardware stores. Use the hygrometer to see if the indoor humidity in your home is between 30% and 50%. Canada Mortgage & Housing Corporation has information on how to properly calibrate commercial hygrometers.

(<http://www.cmhc.ca/en/burema/gesein/abhose/cahy/index.cfm>)



Checklists to control your home environment

Avoiding triggers: bedroom

Dust mites	Dander	Pollen	Moulds	Non-Allergic Triggers	Action	Done (✓)
X	X		X		Replace carpets with wood, tile or linoleum. Use small area rugs; these are easier to clean.	
X	X				Remove all stuffed toys, or purchase toys that are " <i>asthma friendly</i> ". If you cannot wash stuffed toys in hot water, freeze the toy for 24 hours and wash in cool water to rinse out dead dust mites.	
X					Use a damp mop or rag to dust.	
X	X				Replace all upholstered furniture with items that can be wiped clean.	
X					Use a pull-down blind instead of horizontal blinds.	
X					Enclose your bed mattress, box spring and pillows in zippered, dust mite-proof covers. Put tape over the zipper.	
X					Wash all bedding and blankets in hot water (60°C) once a week.	
X			X		Use a dehumidifier or air conditioner to maintain relative humidity between 40 and 50%. Avoid excessive humidity in the bedroom.	
	X				Use a vacuum cleaner with a high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter. Central vacuum systems may also be helpful.	
	X				Keep all pets out of the house, or at least out of the bedroom. Keep them in areas without upholstered furniture or carpet.	

Avoiding triggers: living room

Dust mites	Dander	Pollen	Moulds	Non-Allergic Triggers	Action	Done (✓)
		✗		✗	Avoid going outside on hot, high smog days.	
	✗				Do not get a pet. If you have a pet, find a new home for it.	
				✗	No smoking in the home and car. Smokers can smoke outside.	
		✗	✗	✗	Keep windows closed in high pollen, mould and smog seasons. Use air conditioning.	
				✗	Avoid household sprays and polishes with strong scents.	
✗	✗	✗	✗		Replace all carpets with tile, wood or linoleum.	
	✗				Vacuum frequently.	
			✗	✗	Minimize the number of house plants	
✗			✗		Use a hygrometer and keep humidity between 40 and 50%.	
				✗	Do not use a wood stove or fireplace	
			✗		Throw away old newspapers and magazines	





Checklists to control your home environment

Avoiding triggers: kitchen and bathroom

Dust mites	Dander	Pollen	Moulds	Non-Allergic Triggers	Action	Done (✓)
			X		Clean out the fridge before mould grows on food and fridge surfaces.	
			X		Clean fridge drainage tray monthly.	
			X		Do not use carpeting in the bathroom.	
			X		Keep bathroom tiles, tub, toilet and shower curtain clean and mildew free.	
			X		Vent bathroom fan to the outside and use it when shower is in use.	
				X	Use unscented soaps and deodorants. Do not use perfumes, hair and body sprays. Use cleaning products that are unscented.	
				X	Wash hands frequently to avoid viral infections.	
				X	Post your Asthma Action Plan on your fridge.	
				X	Make sure your medicine cabinet does not contain beta blockers, acetylsalicylic acid (ASA, or Aspirin), Advil®, Motrin® or Aleve®, if they bother your asthma.	





Avoiding triggers: basement, garage & yard

Dust mites	Dander	Pollen	Moulds	Non-Allergic Triggers	Action	Done (✓)
				X	Take all unused paints, chemicals and cleaners to the toxic waste centre	
				X	Avoid oil-based paint, glue and fumes	
				X	Do not use insecticides or pesticides on your lawn	
			X		Do not sleep in the basement	
		X			Plant low-allergen gardens and trees	
X			X		Best not to use a humidifier. If they are used, keep very clean – rinse with vinegar at least once a week	
	X	X	X		Change the furnace filter regularly	
		X	X		Dry clothes in a dryer that is vented to the outside. Pollen collects on clothes that are hung outside to dry	
		X	X		Have someone else mow your lawn, rake your leaves or turn compost	
		X		X	Do not use your car on high-smog days; take public transit or car pool. If you must use your car, use the air conditioner and keep the windows closed	
				X	Do not use gas-powered engines and barbeque especially on high-smog days	
			X		Keep garbage cans clean	
X			X		Clean and maintain air conditioner	
X			X		Keep relative humidity below 50%. Use dehumidifier and keep it clean	
		X			Avoid going outside between 5:00 and 10:00 am, and on hot, windy days. Pollen counts are highest at these times	
X			X		Do not put carpeting directly on concrete floors in the basement	



Asthma diary



Finding out what your non-allergic triggers are may take some time and effort. Keeping a record of your asthma symptoms may help you and your doctor find out what your triggers are. The following is a sample journal entry. If you wish, make photocopies of the attached diary to record your entries. Share your information with your doctor or asthma educator.



Sample diary entry



January 1. I went to a New Year's Eve party and had problems breathing. People were smoking. I started coughing and had tightness in my chest. I left early.



January 2. I had to use my inhaler when I was ice skating.



April 8. Last night there was a thunderstorm. I had to use my inhaler twice during it.



Asthma diary

Date: _____

Asthma Symptoms

- cough wheeze missed school or work
 shortness of breath chest tightness

If yes, when?

- with exercise at night with a cold or flu
 other time _____

Observations _____

Date: _____

Asthma Symptoms

- cough wheeze missed school or work
 shortness of breath chest tightness

If yes, when?

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 other time _____

Observations _____

Date: _____

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- cough wheeze missed school or work
 shortness of breath chest tightness

If yes, when?

- with exercise at night with a cold or flu
 other time _____

Observations _____





Asthma diary

Date: _____

Asthma Symptoms

- cough wheeze missed school or work
 shortness of breath chest tightness

If yes, when?

- with exercise at night with a cold or flu
 other time _____

Observations _____

Date: _____

Asthma Symptoms

- cough wheeze missed school or work
 shortness of breath chest tightness

If yes, when?

- with exercise at night with a cold or flu
 other time _____

Observations _____

AsthmaToday Widget

The Asthma Society of Canada (ASC) has launched a new AsthmaToday Widget!

The AsthmaToday Widget is a useful tool for people living with asthma and associated allergies to stay informed on important issues and information needed to plan your outdoor activities.

The AsthmaToday Widget can be downloaded to your computer or laptop to gain instant access to the Air Quality Health Index (AQHI), available for a number of Canadian cities, local weather forecasts, and the latest news updates from the ASC on programs, educational materials, and research.

The AsthmaToday Widget software is easy to use and can be downloaded free of charge from the ASC's website: <http://www.asthma.ca/widget/>





Asthma.ca™

Asthma Society of Canada®
NATIONAL ASTHMA PATIENT ALLIANCE

A NAPA membership puts you in touch with other Canadians who are working to increase awareness about asthma, improve asthma care, and build a volunteer network to support others affected by the disease. NAPA members also receive important updates and a monthly e-newsletter.

You deserve an active life!
Take control



1 866 787 4050
www.Asthma.ca

**To join the National Asthma Patient Alliance
or for more information:**

Online: www.asthma.ca/napa

E-mail: napainfo@asthma.ca

Phone: 1-866-787-4050

Helping people breathe easier



Your Asthma Basics series:

1 Diagnosis 2 Triggers 3 Medications 4 Kids

For more information from the Asthma Society of Canada:

Asthma.ca

Asthma Kids.ca

4seasonsofasthma.ca

1 866 787 4050
info@asthma.ca

Endorsed by the Family Physician
Airways Group of Canada

