Asthma Triggers:

Certain things cause asthma “attacks” or make asthma worse. They are called triggers. Some common asthma triggers are:

Things your child might be inhaling that you are unaware of and your child is allergic to. These are called allergic triggers. Most children (90%) with asthma or wheeze have allergies, and are allergic to more than one thing. Allergies are a major cause of asthma symptoms.

- House dust mites
- Animal dander
- Cockroaches
- Mold
- Pollens

Infections of the airways

- Viral infections of the nose and throat
- Other infections, such as pneumonia or sinus infections

Irritants in the environment (outside or indoor air)

- Cigarette and other smoke
- Air pollution
- Cold air, dry air
- Odors, fragrances, volatile organic compounds in sprays, and cleaning products

Exercise (About 80% of people with asthma develop wheezing, coughing, and a tight feeling in the chest.

Be sure to check all of your child’s “environment,” such as their bedroom, school, child care, and relative’s homes for exposure to these triggers.

Help Your Child Avoid Triggers

While it is impossible to make the place you live completely allergen or irritant-free, there are things you can do to reduce your child’s exposure to triggers. However, studies show that making sure your child’s bedroom is free from the triggers that make their asthma worse can drastically increase your
Finding out what your child is actually allergic to. The National Health Guidelines recommend that if your child is an asthmatic that you should have a test done to find out what child is allergic to. (This can be done in our office).

Do not smoke or let anyone else smoke in your car or home.

Child’s Bedroom

Reduce exposure to dust mites. The most necessary and effective things to do are to cover your child’s mattress and pillows with special allergy-proof encasings. (Wal-Mart).

Wash their bedding in HOT water every 1-2 weeks.

Remove stuffed toys from their bed (dust collectors).

Vacuum regularly.

Reduce humidity in the house with dehumidifier.

Remove carpets (if possible and affordable).

Pets

If your child is allergic to furry pets, the only truly effective means of reducing exposure and asthma attacks is to remove the pet from the home. If this is not possible because of attachment to the pet, it is important to keep them out of your child’s bedroom. Studies show that by doing this simple thing along with the above mentioned that your child may be able to reduce medication as well as miss less school days.

Consider putting High-Efficiency Particulate Air (HEPA) filters in your child’s bedroom if the pet does remain in the home.

Cockroach

If you child’s allergy test reads that they are allergic to cockroaches, they are not actually allergic to insect itself but rather the droppings. Gross, yes but true. Here is the BEST way to help your child
avoid having asthma attacks due to these critters:

Remove brown paper bags from your home. Either GO GREEN with a sachel at the grocery store or have your food bagged in plastic. Brown paper bags sit in stacks 10 feet high in warehouses before you get them and cockroaches love warehouses. Droppings are on them.

Don’t let your child cover their school books with brown paper bags.

Reduce cockroach infestation around your home by regularly exterminating, setting traps and repairing holes in walls or other entry points.

Avoid leaving exposed food or garbage.

**Mold**

Mold in homes is often due to excessive moisture indoors, which can result from water damage due to flooding, leaky roofs, leaky pipes, or excessive humidity.

Repair any source of water leakage.

Control indoor humidity by utilizing exhaust fans in bathroom & kitchens.

Regularly change shower curtain liner.

Remove fish tanks or aquariums.

Add dehumidifiers in areas with naturally high humidity.

Clean existing mold contamination with detergent and water.

Sometimes porous materials such as wall boards with mold have to be replaced.

**Pollen & Ragweed**

It is nearly impossible to protect your child and their airways from seasonal outdoor allergens. This is why it is so important to find out what your child is allergic to here in the office. We can then put a plan in place to help your child by reducing and controlling their indoor exposures. By reducing their exposure to very specific indoor allergens, when your child is exposed seasonal allergies their overall allergy load will be less.
Pollen exposure can be reduced by using an air conditioner in your child’s bedroom, with the closed vent and leaving the doors and windows closed during high pollen times. Visit www.pollen.com. Great way to see how high the pollen counts are daily.

**Other tips:**

Reduce indoor irritants by using unscented cleaning products, lotions and candles

Avoid heavy perfumes

Avoid mothballs & room deodorizers

Decreasing your child’s exposure to triggers will help decrease their symptoms as well as the need for asthma medications. If your child is using their rescue inhaler (Albuterol) more than 2 days a week for symptom relief they need to be seen in our office immediately and may need to be prescribed a controller medication for their asthma. This means they are not in control of their asthma and are at risk of an attack.

**Referenced:**

American Academy of Pediatrics

The American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology (AAAAI)

National Heart, Lung & Blood Institute

New England Journal of Medicine

National Institute of Health Guidelines