

# Asthma Triggers

*For children and families*

## What are asthma triggers?

Asthma triggers are things that set off or start your asthma. Catching a cold is an asthma trigger, but so are things like molds in your home or pollen in the air. Different people have different asthma triggers.



- Some pesticides
- Some medicines (like aspirin)
- Furry animals
- Molds
- Smoke from fires or wood stove

## What are some triggers of asthma attacks?

- Colds
- Some plants and trees
- Grass
- Hard exercise
- Perfume
- Dust
- Hair spray
- Pollution
- Cockroaches
- Tobacco smoke
- Worrying
- Being upset
- Exhaust from a car



## Why is it good to know my asthma triggers?

Some triggers you can avoid! You can stay away from dogs if you are allergic to them. You can leave the room if someone's perfume is too strong. If your parents smoke cigarettes, it's best if they only smoke outside—never in your home or car. If your parents want to quit smoking cigarettes, ask them to talk to their health care provider. Stay away from those things that can start an asthma attack. These are called asthma triggers. Everybody has different triggers, and you will need to find out what yours are.

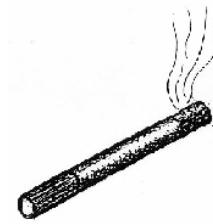
Center for Children with Special Needs  
A Program of

**Children's**  
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Seattle, Washington

Washington State Department of  
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Children with Special Health Care Needs Program

# What are my asthma triggers?

Write as many as you know in the first part of the chart. Write what you can do to avoid or control your triggers in the second part of the chart. The first two rows are examples



My triggers	What I can do to avoid or control them
<i>Cats</i>	<i>Ask someone to put cat outside</i>
<i>Hard running (basketball)</i>	<i>Take my inhaler meds 20 minutes before I play, exercise, practice or have a game</i>

# Sometimes it's hard to avoid my triggers

You're right. And sometimes you just can't do anything about them. But you may be able to do more than you think. Let's see. Here's another chart. In the first part, write down your triggers. In the second part, write down some reasons why it is hard to avoid your triggers. When you've finished that, write some ideas for what you can do. The first two rows are examples.

Trigger	Reasons it's hard to avoid my triggers	Ideas for what I can do
<i>Cats</i>	<i>We own a cat.</i>	<i>Keep the cat out of my room.</i>
<i>Dust mites in my bed</i>	<i>I sleep in my bed every night.</i>	<i>Wash my sheets in hot water once a week.</i>

*This handout has been reviewed by community and Children's Hospital health care providers. However, your child's needs are unique. Before you act or rely upon this information, please talk with your child's health care provider. Adapted from Living with Asthma, Children's Hospital and Regional Medical Center. Thanks to Laura Castello, illustrator, and Neal Starkman, writer, Flashpoint Development.*

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

- Pulmonary Medicine, (206) 987-2174
- Your Child's Health Care Provider
- Center for Children with Special Needs Web site at [www.cshcn.org](http://www.cshcn.org)
- Children's Resource Line (206) 987-2500 or (866) 987-2500 toll-free Washington, Alaska, Montana, Idaho, or [www.seattlechildrens.org](http://www.seattlechildrens.org)

*Children's will make this information available in alternate formats upon request. Please call Marketing Communications at (206) 987-5205.*

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