

Asthma episodes often start when you encounter a “trigger.” There are two types of triggers: irritants and allergens. Allergens cause you to have an allergic reaction and will affect those who have seasonal allergies a bit more than others. Irritants bother your airways and make it harder to breathe.

## Common Allergens and How to Manage Them

### Animal Dander from Fur or Feathers



Keep pets out of your bedroom and off upholstered furniture.



Vacuum carpets and sweep floors regularly.

### Pollen



Keep windows closed and avoid being outside on days when pollen levels are high.



Talk to your healthcare provider about allergy medication.

### Dust



Use a mask or face covering while cleaning dust.



Use allergen-proof mattress and pillowcases.



Wash sheets and stuffed animals regularly.



Vacuum carpets and sweep floors regularly.

### Mold



Clean mold with diluted bleach (10 parts water to 1 part bleach) and fix leaks where mold typically grows.



Use the exhaust fan while showering.

### Rodents and Cockroaches



Remove as many food sources as you can by keeping food and garbage sealed.



Sweep and vacuum regularly.



Everyone has different triggers, so it is important to know your unique triggers. Regardless of your triggers, always carry your quick-relief inhaler with you in case of an emergency.

## Common Irritants and How to Manage Them

### Air Pollution



Limit outside activities on days with poor air quality.



Try to keep windows closed on days with high pollen count.



Check [www.airnow.gov](http://www.airnow.gov) for daily forecasts.

### Smoke



Try to avoid areas where anyone smokes or vapes.



If you smoke or vape, consider quitting.

### Strong Odors



Avoid using perfumes, colognes, hair sprays, or air fresheners.



Use cleaning wipes instead of cleaning sprays.



Dilute harsh cleaning products with water.

## Managing Other Triggers



### Hot and Cold Weather

Hot, humid air tends to have more pollen and dust particles. Avoid outdoor activities during the hottest part of the day. Cold air can dry out airways and trigger asthma. Cover your mouth and nose when you are outside.



### Cold and Flu

Get a flu shot every year. Wash hands with soap and warm water or use hand sanitizer. Respiratory infections like a cold or the flu may trigger asthma episodes or worsen asthma symptoms.



### Strong Emotions

Try your best to remain calm when laughing or crying. A change in breathing patterns during strong emotions may trigger asthma symptoms.



### Exercise

Talk to your healthcare provider about using your quick-relief inhaler before exercising. Warm up before and cool down after exercising.