

Wellness Culture

May Observance: Asthma and Allergy Awareness Month

Key Information: The Allergy and Asthma Foundation of America (AAFA) has declared May as Asthma and Allergy Awareness Month. Approximately 20 million people suffer from asthma; 6.1 million are children. Asthma attacks account for more than 16 million ER and or outpatient visits each year.

How to reduce asthma triggers in the home:

- **Dust and vacuum** – vacuum 3 times a week and when dusting uses a moist cloth to help trap the dust. Wear a mask if necessary and if you have trinkets keeping them in a cabinet will help reduce dusting on a frequent basis.
- **Avoid using aerosols** – aerosols are a strong asthma triggers and can cause respiratory distress. If possible it is best to avoid products that disperse into the air.
- **Use exhaust fans while cooking**
- **Control dust mites**- wash blankets and tumble pillows once a week to reduce the amount of dust mites. Also use dust mite allergen control casings for your pillows, mattresses and box springs.
- **Reduce “triggers” caused by pets** – pet dander is strong trigger for an asthmatic. Keep pets out of your bedroom and avoid having “caged” animals such as rabbits or guinea pigs.
- **Reduce “triggers” in the bathroom** – a moist environment is an asthma trigger. Reduce the amount of mold on your shower curtain by cleaning it a few times a month.
- **Reduce “triggers” caused by plants** – overwatering your plants can cause mold to grow. If you notice mold (white fuzz) growing in your plants, remove the mold and repot the plant outdoors or replace with clean soil.

http://lungdiseases.about.com/od/asthma/p/reduce_triggers.htm

Do's and Don't for allergy sufferers:

- **DO** keep windows closed at night to prevent pollens or molds from drifting into your home. Instead, if needed, use air conditioning, which cleans, cools, and dries the air.
- **DO** keep car windows closed when traveling.
- **DO** try to stay indoors when the pollen count or humidity is reported to be high, and on windy days when dust and pollen are blown about.
- **DON'T** mow lawns or be around freshly cut grass; mowing stirs up pollens and molds. Also don't rake leaves, as this also stirs up mold.
- **DON'T** hang sheets or clothing out to dry. Pollens and molds may on these items.

<http://www.ppsinc.org/allergy/dodont.htm>

Action Steps Made Easy:

1. If you are suffering from nasal congestion, sneezing runny nose, itchy, red, watery eyes talk with your doctor and find out what may be causing these symptoms.
2. Start spring cleaning early. Make a habit to wash the bed sheets every week and vacuum at least once a week to help reduce dust around the house.
3. Boost your immune system by exercising a minimum of 30 minutes every day and eating a healthy diet. A strong immune system will help fight or reduce allergy symptoms.

Life Impact: Change is difficult but often essential to survival.



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