



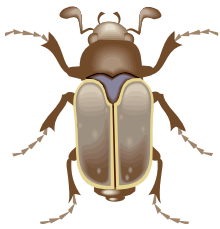
Asthma Basics

What is Asthma:

- Asthma is a chronic lung disease with 2 main components: inflammation (airway swelling and irritation) and bronchoconstriction (tightening of the muscles surrounding the airways). Both cause airways to narrow, making it hard to breathe.

What causes asthma:

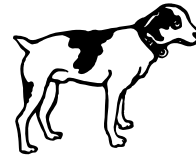
- Although there is no known cause for asthma, there are certain triggers



Common Triggers:

Triggers are things that can cause asthma symptoms or attacks

- Allergens
 - Dust mites
 - Animal dander
 - Cockroach droppings and remains
 - Mold
 - pollen
- Inhalants:
 - Strong odors (like perfume, gasoline fumes, hairspray, paint)
 - Ozone (outdoor)
 - Smoke (tobacco & wood)



Why asthma matters?

- Asthma is unpredictable—symptoms may seem mild or even nonexistent, but they can flare up and become severe at any time
- Asthma is serious—about 5,000 Americans die from asthma each year
- In Oklahoma, asthma affects nearly 1 in 13 school-aged children, and is the leading cause of school absenteeism due to a chronic illness
- In 2000, hospital charges due to asthma accounted for approximately \$20 million.
- In Oklahoma, more females are hospitalized for asthma than males

For more information, visit: <http://www.asthmaok.org>

Home Checklist

Secondhand Smoke

Does anyone smoke in the home or car?

Recommended Action Steps:

- Keep the home and car smoke-free.
- Do not allow visitors to smoke in the home.
- Take the smoke-free home pledge and post a smoke-free home decal or magnet to show that the house is a “smoke-free”

Warm-blooded Pets (such as cats and dogs)

Is the patient's asthma worse when around warm-blooded pets?

Recommended Action Steps:

- If possible, remove the pet from the home or keep the pet outside.
- If this is not possible, keep the pet out of the patient's sleeping area and off of the furniture.

Consumer Products

Is the patient's asthma worse when around chemicals or products with strong odors (such as cleaners, paints, adhesives, pesticides, air fresheners, or cosmetics)?

Recommended Action Steps:

- Limit patient's exposure as much as possible by minimizing product use, using products only when patient is not present, or trying alternative products.
- If products are used, carefully follow manufacturer's instructions on the label and make sure the area is well ventilated.

Heating and Cooling Systems

Does the heating and cooling system use filters?

Recommended Action Steps:

- If so, replace the filters quarterly.
- Use filters with higher efficiency than standard furnace filters, such as upgraded pleated filters, if heating or cooling system manufacturer's specifications allow.

Bedding and Sleeping Arrangements

Recommended Action Steps:

- Cover patient's mattress in a dust-proof (allergen impermeable) zippered cover. Clean cover according to manufacturer's instructions.
- If it is necessary for the patient to sleep on upholstered furniture such as a sofa, then cover furniture with washable slipcovers or sheets and vacuum furniture regularly (including removing cushions and vacuuming in cracks and crevices).
- Choose washable bedding.
- Wash bedding regularly in hot water and dry completely.
- Cover patient's pillow in a dust-proof (allergen impermeable) zippered cover. Clean cover according to manufacturer's instructions.

Flooring/Upholstered Furniture/Stuffed Toys/Window Treatments

Recommended Action Steps:

- If carpeting is present, vacuum carpets, area rugs, and floors regularly.
- If possible, use a vacuum cleaner with a high efficiency filter.
- Mop hard surface floors regularly. Wash throw rugs regularly in hot water. Dry completely.
- Clean baseboards regularly using a damp cloth with warm, soapy water.
- Someone besides the patient should vacuum, sweep, empty the dust canister and change the vacuum bag.
- If possible, the patient should stay out of rooms when they are being vacuumed or swept.
- If the patient vacuums, sweeps, empties the dust canister, or changes the vacuum bag, he or she should wear a dust mask.
- Cover upholstered furniture with washable slipcovers or sheets.
- Vacuum upholstered furniture regularly, including removing cushions and vacuuming in cracks and crevices.
- If replacing furniture, consider purchasing a non-upholstered furniture - such as vinyl, wood, or leather that can be easily wiped down
- Choose washable stuffed toys, and wash frequently in hot water. Dry completely.
- Limit the number of stuffed toys in patient's bed and sleeping area.
- Wash and dry curtains regularly.
- Dust window sills, blinds, and shades regularly using a damp cloth with warm, soapy water. Dry completely.