



# May is Asthma Awareness Month

By U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 7

## Take Action During Asthma Awareness Month

### What is Asthma?

Asthma is a serious, life-threatening respiratory disease that affects over 20 million Americans. Rates of asthma have risen sharply over the past thirty years, particularly among children ages 5 to 14. Although there is no cure for asthma yet, asthma can be controlled through medical treatment and management of environmental triggers.

### Asthma Triggers

Learn more about elements found in the indoor and outdoor environment that can cause, trigger, or make worse asthma symptoms and what you can do to reduce their impact.

- **Secondhand Smoke** is a mixture of smoke from the burning end of a cigarette, pipe or cigar and the smoke exhaled by the smoker that is often found in homes and cars where smoking is allowed.
- **Dust Mites** are too small to be seen, but can be found in almost every home in mattresses and bedding materials, carpets, upholstered furniture, stuffed toys and curtains.
- **Mold** can grow indoors when mold spores land on wet or damp surfaces. In the home, mold is most commonly found in the bathroom, kitchen and basement.
- **Cockroaches and other Pests'** body parts, secretions, droppings and urine, droppings and saliva of pests, such as rodents, are often found in areas where food and water are present.
- **Warm-Blooded Pets' (such as cats and dogs)** skin flakes, urine and saliva can be found in homes where pets are allowed inside.
- **Nitrogen Dioxide** is a byproduct of indoor fuel-burning appliances, such as gas stoves, gas or oil furnaces, fireplaces, wood stoves and unvented kerosene or gas space heaters.

### Preventing Asthma Attacks

#### Step 1 - Talk to a doctor

If your child has asthma or you think your child may have asthma, take your child to a doctor. Your doctor will work with you to keep your child from having asthma attacks.

#### Step 2 - Make a Plan

Work with your doctor to create an Asthma Action Plan that will help you learn to prevent your child's asthma attacks and

## How Healthy Is Your Home?



### IS THE AIR IN YOUR HOME HEALTHY?

#### Indoor Environmental Asthma Triggers

Americans spend up to 90% of their time indoors. Therefore, indoor allergens and irritants can play a significant role in triggering asthma attacks. It is important to recognize potential asthma triggers in the indoor environment and reduce your exposure to those triggers. Your doctor can help you to determine which triggers affect your asthma and develop a specific plan to reduce your triggers.

#### Indoor Environmental Asthma Triggers

- Secondhand Smoke
- Dust Mites
- Molds
- Cockroaches and Pests
- Pets
- Nitrogen Dioxide
- Outdoor Air

To help you work with your doctor to create an Asthma Action Plan for your individual circumstances, you can download a sample plan at: [www.epa.gov/asthma/triggers.html](http://www.epa.gov/asthma/triggers.html)

will help control your child's asthma on a regular basis.

#### Step 3 - Asthma-Proof Your Home

Triggers are a part of everyday life. Learn

more about things that might trigger an asthma attack and what you can do to control or get rid of them and help your child stay healthy.



*When you and your doctor make the plan, be sure to include:*

- Your child's asthma triggers
- Instructions for asthma medicines
- What to do if your child has an asthma attack
- When to call your doctor
- Emergency telephone numbers

#### For more information:

##### Asthma Awareness Month

[www.epa.gov/asthma/awm/](http://www.epa.gov/asthma/awm/)

##### Facts about Asthma

[www.epa.gov/asthma/about.html](http://www.epa.gov/asthma/about.html)

##### Asthma Triggers

[www.epa.gov/asthma/triggers.html](http://www.epa.gov/asthma/triggers.html)

##### Healthy Homes Community Initiative

[www.epa.gov/region7/citizens/healthy\\_homes.htm](http://www.epa.gov/region7/citizens/healthy_homes.htm)

For more information about Asthma, contact EPA at 800-223-0425.

The Black Health Care Coalition, along with sponsoring partners, will hold an **Active Kids Camp** for children living with asthma, July 25 – 29, 2011. The camp is **NO COST** for children and families to participate. To enroll, call 816-444-9600.

To inquire about managing your child's asthma, and for more information on safe and healthy homes and how to receive a healthy homes assessment, contact Children's Mercy Hospital at 816-855-1895.

