

# Asthma: Tips for Improved Sleep



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Asthma is a chronic inflammatory disease that affects the lungs, causing airways to narrow and swell, making breathing difficult. Individuals with asthma can react to various allergens and irritants, also known as asthma triggers. Exposure to triggers can lead to asthma symptoms, such as coughing, wheezing, shortness of breath, or chest tightness.

Understanding and avoiding an individual's triggers is essential for maintaining the control of asthma. Because people spend most of their time indoors, reducing exposure to asthma triggers indoors is essential for disease management. Controlling triggers in sleeping areas is a great place to start.

## Common Asthma Triggers<sup>1</sup>

- Dust mites and molds
- Tobacco or wood smoke
- Pollen and pet dander
- Strong odors and chemicals
- Cockroaches and rodents
- Air pollutants

## Steps to Achieve Asthma Control for Improved Sleep<sup>2</sup>

- Choose allergen-proof mattress and pillowcase covers
- Wash sheets and bedding once a week in 130°F water, and dry on high heat
- Keep pets out of the bedroom and never allow them on the bed or other furniture
- Prevent wet or damp clothing and towels from piling up
- Use air cleaners with a high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter
- Replace mattresses every 10 years and pillows every two years
- Remove carpeting when possible and vacuum floors and mattresses weekly
- Avoid eating food in the bedroom and remove trash and clutter frequently
- Wash stuffed toys once a week (\*For toys that cannot be washed, freeze in a sealed plastic bag for 24 hours once a week and then tumble in the dryer)
- Dust often with a damp or microfiber cloth
- Learn more about common environmental asthma triggers and how to address them and gain control from the [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\)](https://www.epa.gov/asthma/asthma-triggers)<sup>3</sup>
- Talk with a healthcare provider about identifying asthma triggers and having an [Asthma Action Plan](#)

## References

1. CDC. (January 22, 2024). Controlling Asthma. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <https://www.cdc.gov/asthma/control/index.html>.
2. Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America. (2024). Healthier Home. <https://aafa.org/allergies/prevent-allergies/healthier-home-indoor-air-quality/>.
3. EPA. (April 29, 2025). Manage Environmental Asthma Triggers. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. <https://www.epa.gov/asthma/manage-environmental-asthma-triggers>.

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For additional information on asthma:  
[www.asthma.in.gov](http://www.asthma.in.gov)

