

Steps Landlords Can Take to Reduce Common Asthma Triggers

Asthma can be triggered by many common conditions and substances in homes. But you can take some simple steps to help your tenants remain happy and healthy while also increasing the value of your property.

Keep it dry

Mold and mold spores are major asthma triggers. They can grow on damp or wet surfaces. These are often found in kitchens, bathrooms, and basements. The key to mold control is moisture control.

- Provide bathroom and kitchen exhaust fans
- Vent exhaust fans and clothing dryers to the outdoors
- Fix all leaks, roof problems, and plumbing problems as soon as possible
- Make sure that kitchen and bathroom drains are clean and working properly
- Replace moldy ceiling tiles and carpeting
- Wash and dry hard surfaces to prevent and remove mold
- Use a clean dehumidifier in the basement of multi-unit dwellings
- Make sure outdoor grading and drainage allow water to flow away from homes

Keep it pest free

Pests such as cockroaches or rodents (and their droppings) can make asthma worse. Cockroaches and rodents are often found in kitchens, bathrooms, and basements. This is where they find food and water.

- Install rodent shields or storm windows on all basement windows that open
- Install screens on all windows that open
- Repair holes that may give pests access to homes
- Provide pesticide gel or boric acid to tenants for cockroaches (if evidence of cockroaches is found)
- Provide poison baits or sticky traps to tenants for rodents (if evidence of rodents is found)

Keep it clean

- Consider replacing carpeting with hard-surface flooring
- Clean basements, attics, and garages in multi-unit dwellings at least once a year
- Clean common areas in multi-unit dwellings regularly
- Rake leaves, dirt, and dust away from houses and bag it for garbage pickup

Keep the air moving

- Make sure that windows open and close properly
- Make sure that gas stoves, water heaters, furnaces, and fireplace are vented properly
- Trim bushes and trees so they don't block windows or vents to the outdoors

Keep it poison free

- Consider making your property smoke-free
- Don't use toxic cleaners or other toxic household products

Keep it maintained

- Repair leaky roofs, windows, and faucets
- Clean window wells, gutters, and drains
- Check for signs of water damage or mold both inside and outside of homes
- Seal holes in construction materials and gaps around pipes
- Clean up yards, porches, walkways, and driveways
- Make sure water heaters and furnaces work properly
- Make sure vents for clothing dryers, water heaters, furnaces, and fireplace are working properly
- Check for signs of pests

For more information, visit www.health.ri.gov or call the HEALTH Information Line: 401-222-5960 / RI Relay 711

