

















# Managing Asthma Triggers

## In The Classroom



Asthma is a chronic lung disease that sometimes results in the swelling or inflammation of the airways. Asthma cannot be cured, but it can be controlled. An important part of controlling asthma for students is maintaining the environmental health of classrooms and managing common asthma triggers. It requires the efforts of all school personnel to manage the classroom environment.

Asthma trigger	How can you control exposure?
 Dust mites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Eliminate or limit the number of stuffed animals and pillows in the classroom.</li><li>• Filter the output from forced hot air (FHA) registers.</li><li>• Remove carpets. If a carpet cannot be removed, it should be vacuumed daily.</li><li>• Have students sit away from FHAs (keeping them away from a direct, dry hot air source).</li></ul>
 Cockroaches/ Mice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Don't allow students to eat in classrooms.</li><li>• Remove trash that may contain food or liquid.</li><li>• Clean desk tops routinely.</li><li>• Clean floors daily.</li></ul>
 Pets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Make sure that pets stay out of schools. Animal allergens remain suspended in the air and follow air currents throughout buildings.</li><li>• Be aware that students with pets at home will have allergens on their clothing. This could affect other students with asthma who sit nearby.</li></ul>
 Pollen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Keep windows closed on high-pollen days.</li><li>• Keep flowers out of classrooms.</li></ul>
 Mold	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Dry any condensation that collects around ventilation units or windows.</li><li>• Don't over water potted plants.</li><li>• Report leaks in classrooms and other areas in your school.</li><li>• Report mold in classrooms and other areas in your school.</li></ul>
 Food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Be aware that treats brought to school for all to share may seriously affect some children who have asthma.</li></ul>
 Latex	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Know what classroom products contain latex and know which students (if any) are allergic to latex.</li></ul>
 Chalk dust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use anti-dust chalk.</li><li>• Use damp cloths rather than erasers to clean blackboards.</li><li>• Do not allow students who have asthma to erase blackboards.</li></ul>
 Insecticide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Only use products for exterminating insects and rodents when students are not expected in the building. These products should not be used during the school day.</li><li>• Make sure that products for maintaining playing fields are non-toxic and are applied only when students are not expected to use the fields.</li></ul>
 Pollution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Plan alternate activities for children when pollution levels are high.</li><li>• Keep students away from bus and automobile exhaust.</li></ul>
 Aerosols and odors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use dry-erase pens that are low-odor.</li><li>• Do not use air fresheners or strong-smelling cleaning products.</li><li>• Do not wear perfume, aftershave, or other scented products when students are in the classroom or shortly before they enter.</li></ul>
 Infection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Teach good hygiene and hand washing techniques.</li><li>• Open windows to change the air in classrooms.</li></ul>
 Exercise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lead warm-up exercises before aerobic activities.</li><li>• Make sure that any child with exercise-induced asthma is properly hydrated before exercising.</li><li>• Make sure children take quick-relief medication (Albuterol) 15 minutes before exercising if they have been instructed to do so by a doctor.</li></ul>
 Cold air and weather changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Teach children to cover their noses and mouths when they first go outside. This will warm the air they inhale.</li><li>• Plan indoor activities for students with asthma when it is very cold outside.</li></ul>

For more information, contact the Health Information Line at 401-222-5960 / RI Relay 711 or visit [www.health.ri.gov](http://www.health.ri.gov)

This publication was supported by Grant/Cooperative Agreement Number 459EH000524 from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Its content is solely the responsibility of the authors and does not necessarily represent the official views of CDC.