

## TIPS FOR VACUUMING

If possible, use a vacuum that has a HEPA filter and/or exhaust; or use a special bag that holds allergens inside the bag.

Vacuum at least once a week. Vacuum more often - daily if possible - if you have a pet.

Empty the dirt bag when it's half full (or throw it away if it's disposable).

An upright vacuum or a canister with a powered nozzle is best for carpet. They pick up a lot more dust than a canister vacuum without a powered nozzle.

A canister vacuum without a powered nozzle is good for cleaning upholstery, draperies, blinds and light dusting.

For the vacuum you already have, use a special (HEPA) bag that holds allergens inside the bag & an exhaust filter.

If you get a new vacuum, get one with a HEPA filter & special bags that hold allergens inside the bag.



## GET MORE INFORMATION ABOUT ALLERGIES AND ASTHMA FROM THESE WEBSITES:

### PATIENTS . FAMILIES

[www.aanma.org](http://www.aanma.org)

[www.lungusa.org](http://www.lungusa.org)

[www.asthmamoms.org](http://www.asthmamoms.org)

[www.aaai.org](http://www.aaai.org)

[www.aafa.org](http://www.aafa.org)

[www.childrensdisabilities.info/asthma/books-asthma.html](http://www.childrensdisabilities.info/asthma/books-asthma.html)

[www.epa.gov.gov/iaq/molds/moldguide.html](http://www.epa.gov.gov/iaq/molds/moldguide.html)

### SCHOOLS . TEACHERS

[www.asthmaandschools.org](http://www.asthmaandschools.org)

[www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dash/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dash/index.htm)

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

### ALTERNATIVE HOME PRODUCTS

[www.healthhouse.org](http://www.healthhouse.org)

[www.consciouschoice.com](http://www.consciouschoice.com)

[www.natallergy.com](http://www.natallergy.com)

[www.sustainableenterprises.com](http://www.sustainableenterprises.com)

[www.Filtrete.com](http://www.Filtrete.com)

## Create an Allergen-free Home Environment



Asthma Program

in the

Environmental Health  
Epidemiology Bureau

Epidemiology and  
Response Division

To find out about asthma  
management and education in  
New Mexico call  
505-476-3571 or 800-879-3421

## WHAT ARE THE ALLERGY AND ASTHMA TRIGGERS IN MY HOME ?

### The most common allergens or 'asthma triggers' found in a home are:

-animal dander - dust mites - cockroaches - mold/mildew - pollen - sprays (cleaners, perfume) - strong odors -tobacco smoke.

**Triggers are things that make your asthma worse and lead to attacks or 'episodes'.** Avoiding triggers or working to lessen their impact is an important part of asthma treatment.

### Triggers narrow the airways by:

Increased swelling in the airways.  
Extra mucus (a thick liquid) production.  
The muscles around the airways to tighten and squeeze the airways together.

### Asthma Symptoms:

Asthma symptoms come and go. They can be mild to severe. Common symptoms include:

Shortness of Breath  
Coughing  
Wheezing  
Tightness in the chest

By keeping your home clean, you can control allergens, ensuring to help keep you and your family healthy and safe from unexpected asthma episodes.



## HOW DO I CLEAN MY HOME TO MINIMIZE ASTHMA TRIGGERS?

### BEGIN WITH A CLEANING PLAN:

Work with your doctor or clinic to figure out which allergens affect you or your child the most.

Set a weekly schedule to clean your home, for example, designate certain days for selected tasks.

Don't allow pets in bedrooms. Keep bedroom and closet doors closed.



To remove carpet or replace furniture, do the easiest, least expensive things first - start where the allergy-asthma sufferer sleeps.

Don't allow smoking in the home and if you smoke, begin a smoking cessation program. Tobacco smoke severely exacerbates asthma symptoms.

To avoid cockroaches, keep foods tightly covered and properly stored. Cockroaches are attracted to food and moisture.

Use fragrance-free, non-toxic cleaning products whenever possible. Follow label directions and use minimal amounts. Break your cleaning into small tasks and open windows when using cleaners.

Ask your doctor for asthma education information (also see websites on back of this pamphlet).

Take your asthma medications as prescribed. Keep an asthma diary and join an asthma support group.

## DUST MITES IN THE HOUSE?!

Dust mites typically reside in humid climates and they're too small to see.

They feed on skin flakes in pillows, bedding, upholstery, carpeting.

Use dust mite-proof covers (allergen impermeable) covers.

In Bedroom use area rugs, not carpet if possible.

Keep carpets, furniture dust free.

Use smooth blinds or shades instead of fabric curtains when you can.

Clean & dry window frames, sills regularly. Dust contains pollen, mildew & dust mites.

## PREVENT MOLD GROWTH

Molds produce allergens.

Allergic responses include sneezing, runny nose & red eyes.

Keep bathrooms, kitchens, laundry areas, dry and well ventilated.

After showering, hang very wet towels and rugs in well-ventilated area.

Repair all leaks immediately. This will prevent heartaches later.

Periodically check around water heaters, behind washers and under sinks for any leaks.

Periodically check walls and pipes for condensation and correct that.

Immediately remove wet carpeting.