



# ASTHMA AWARENESS

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development - Center for Faith Based and Neighborhood Partnerships

*Definition: A healthy home is sited, designed, built, renovated, and maintained in ways that support the health of residents.<sup>1</sup>*



## FACT

In 2009, approximately 24.6 million people in the United States (or 8.2%) were diagnosed with asthma.<sup>3</sup>

Asthma affects almost 25 million people in America and is the third-ranking cause of hospitalization among children under 15.<sup>4</sup>

In 2008 less than half of people with asthma reported being taught how to avoid triggers.<sup>5</sup>

Asthma costs the US about \$3,300 per person with asthma each year from 2002 to 2007 in medical expenses, missed school and work days, and early deaths.<sup>5</sup>

## LEARN

Asthma is a lifelong disease that causes wheezing, breathlessness, chest tightness, and coughing. It can limit a person's quality of life. While we don't know why asthma rates are rising, we do know that most people with asthma can control their symptoms and prevent asthma attacks by avoiding asthma triggers and correctly using prescribed medicines.

Avoiding asthma triggers is an important part of your ability to control asthma. Once you identify these triggers, the goal is to develop preventative strategies to reduce the asthma attacks in the home environment.

### COMMON ASTHMA TRIGGERS:

- Tobacco Smoke
- Cleaning Products
- Dust and Dust Mites
- Cold Weather
- Mold and Mildew
- Pets
- Cockroaches
- Stress

## Characteristics of a Healthy Home<sup>2</sup>

### KEEP IT DRY

Fix moisture problems and thoroughly dry wet areas to prevent mold.

### KEEP IT CLEAN

Remove dust with damp cloth.

Remove shoes when entering home to reduce dirt and dust accumulation.

Vacuum often with HEPA (High Efficiency Particle Air) filters.

Clean surfaces by wiping off crumbs and other traces of food from counters, tables, and floors.

### KEEP IT PEST FREE

Wash dishes soon after eating.

Store food in sealed containers.

Degrease oven, stoves and counters.

Declutter – reduce or eliminate non-essential stored items.

### KEEP IT VENTILATED

Proper ventilation can reduce the hazards of allergens, mold and carbon dioxide.

### KEEP IT CONTAMINANT FREE

Quit smoking and don't let others smoke in your home or car.

Keep pets away from sleeping areas and off beds.

Minimize use of VOCs (Volatile Organic Compounds) cleaning products. Consider using "Green" products or non-toxic alternative cleaners such as vinegar and baking soda.

### KEEP IT MAINTAINED

Seal cracks in floors and walls.

Identify and quickly fix water leaks in home.

Check for cracking, chipping and peeling paint.

Check to make sure all screens on windows are intact.



## GOAL

- Maintain a clean home to reduce pest infestations and exposure to contaminants.
- Keep your home dry to prevent the creation of a nurturing environment for mold and pest infestations such as mice, rodents and roaches.
- Achieve good indoor air quality by maintaining a well ventilated home, free of air pollutants.
- Reduce allergens in the home, including dust mites, rodents, pet dander, as these can trigger an asthma attack.
- Get medical advice and follow your doctor's instructions.

## Resources

### U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

#### “What is Asthma”

[http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/documents/huddoc?id=DOC\\_12336.pdf](http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/documents/huddoc?id=DOC_12336.pdf)

[http://www.hud.gov/offices/lead/library/hhi/HYHH\\_Booklet.pdf](http://www.hud.gov/offices/lead/library/hhi/HYHH_Booklet.pdf)

### U.S. Environmental Protection Agency - Publications and Reports

<http://www.epa.gov/asthma/about.html>

<http://www.epa.gov/asthma/publications.html#factsheets>

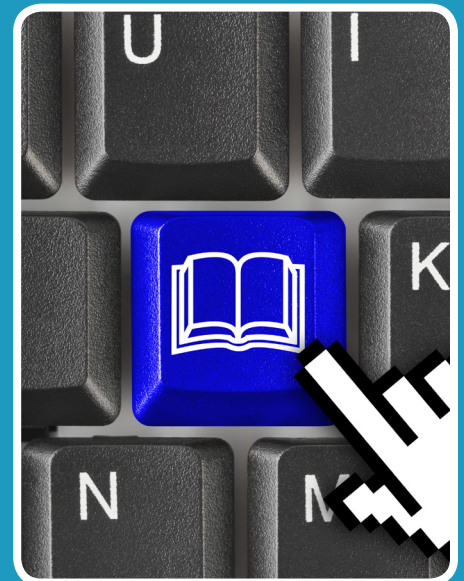
<http://www.epa.gov/asthma/multimedia.html>

### Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

#### Asthma: Basic Information

<http://www.cdc.gov/asthma/publications.html>

<http://www.cdc.gov/asthma/podcasts.html>



<sup>1</sup>Office of the Surgeon General (US). The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Promote Healthy Homes, 2009; <sup>2</sup>National Center for Healthy Housing, 2009, Essentials for Healthy Homes; <sup>3</sup>National Health Interview Survey, 1980-2009, National Center for Health Statistics, CDC; <sup>4</sup>National Hospital Discharge Survey: 2005 Annual Summary with Detailed Diagnosis and Procedure Data, 2012, National Center for Health Statistics. Vital Health Statistics 12 (165); <sup>5</sup>CDC Vital Signs, 2011, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

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