



## **Conquering your Asthma**

### **Education and guidelines based on National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute Report 2007**

You can help prevent asthma episodes by staying away from things that make your asthma worse. This guide suggests many ways to help you do this. You need to find out what makes your asthma worse. Some things that make asthma worse for some people are not a problem for others. You do not need to do all of the things listed in this guide.

**1) Dust Mites:** Many people who have asthma are allergic to dust mites. Dust mites are like tiny “bugs” you cannot see that live in cloth or carpet. Things that will help the most:

- 1) Encase your mattress and pillow in a special dust-mite proof cover.
- 2) Wash the pillow each week in hot water. Water must be hotter than 130 °F to kill the mites. Cooler water used with detergent and bleach can also be effective.
- 3) Wash the sheets and blankets on your bed each week in hot water.
- 4) Reduce indoor humidity to or below 60 percent. Dehumidifiers or central air conditioners can do this.
- 5) Try not to sleep or lie on cloth-covered cushions or furniture.
- 6) Remove carpets from your bedroom, if you can.
- 7) Keep stuffed toys out of the bed, or wash the toys weekly in hot water or in cooler water with detergent and bleach. Placing toys weekly in a dryer or freezer may help. Prolonged exposure to dry heat or freezing can kill mites but does not remove allergen.

**2) Animal Dander:** Some people are allergic to the flakes of skin or dried saliva from animals. The best thing to do:

- 1) Keep pets with fur or hair out of your home.
- 2) If you can't keep the pet outdoors, then: Keep the pet out of your bedroom, and keep the bedroom door closed.
- 3) Remove carpets and furniture covered with cloth from your home. If that is not possible, keep the pet out of the rooms where these are.

**3) Cockroach:** Many people with asthma are allergic to the dried droppings and remains of cockroaches.

- 1) Keep all food out of your bedroom.
- 2) Keep food and garbage in closed containers (Never leave food out).
- 3) Use poison baits, powders, gels, or paste (for example, boric acid to get rid of Cockroaches).
- 4) If a spray is used to kill roaches, stay out of the room until the odor goes away.

**4) Vacuum Cleaning:**

- 1) Try to get someone else to vacuum for you once or twice a week, if you can.
- 2) Stay out of rooms while they are being vacuumed and for a short while afterward.
- 3) If you vacuum, use a dust mask (from a hardware store), a central cleaner with the collecting bag outside the home, or a vacuum cleaner with a HEPA filter or a double-layered bag.

**5) Indoor Mold:**

- 1) Fix leaking faucets, pipes, or other sources of water.
- 2) Clean moldy surfaces.
- 3) Dehumidify basements if possible.

**6) Pollen and Outdoor Mold:** During your allergy season (when pollen or mold spore counts are high):

- 1) Try to keep your windows closed.
- 2) If possible, stay indoors with windows closed during the midday and afternoon, if you can. Pollen and some mold spore counts are highest at that time.
- 3) You may need to take or increase allergy medicine before your allergy season starts.