



# asthma & allergy friendly® CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

## Tips to Improve Indoor Air Quality

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## Rooms of the House

**In General**--The best way to improve indoor air quality is to reduce the sources of allergens and irritants in your home. We take about 20,000 breaths each day and spend nearly 90% of our time indoors.

- Establish regular cleaning routines
- Remove strong scents like candles and harsh cleaners
- Traditional candles can be replaced with beeswax, soy or battery powered ones
- Measure your home's humidity levels and keep below 50%
- Replace carpets with solid surface flooring, if possible. Otherwise use a CERTIFIED **asthma & allergy friendly**® vacuum weekly
- Use CERTIFIED **asthma & allergy friendly**® air cleaner and filters

**Bedroom**--Allergy control starts in the bedroom, individuals spend approximately 1/3 of their time in their bedrooms.

### *Protect and clean your bed*

- Use a CERTIFIED **asthma & allergy friendly**® Vacuum for mattresses and fabric furniture
- Use CERTIFIED **asthma & allergy friendly**® bedding
- Replace pillows if more than 2 years old
- Replace mattress if more than 10 years old
- Check allergen covers on mattresses and pillows for wear
- Wash bedding weekly in hot, soapy water 130 degrees or hotter
- No pets in the bedroom and especially on your bed

### *Clean furniture and decor*

- Wash curtains and rugs in water 130 degrees or hotter
- Dust behind furniture, like dressers and nightstands
- Dust ceiling fans and light fixtures
- Dust high closet shelves
- Air out new furniture in another room

### *Improve air quality*

- Replace or clean filters in air cleaners
- Keep windows closed during peak pollen times or during times of high outdoor pollution



- Use a **CERTIFIED asthma & allergy friendly**® portable air cleaner in your bedroom
- Remove traditional scented candles and potpourri and replace with beeswax, soy or battery powered ones

### *Reduce moisture*

- Check bedroom windows for condensation and remove mold immediately
- If you live in a wet climate, you may need a humidifier using distilled water to keep the humidity levels below 50% in your room
- Keep furniture away from walls, and check closets regularly for mold growth
- If you have a connected bathroom
- Run a fan at least 15-20 minutes after showering
- Fix leaks
- Clean showers, tubs, and sinks often to prevent mold

### *Clean bedroom floors weekly*

- Vacuum/mop under all furniture
- Remove Clutter
- If possible, replace carpets with solid surface flooring

## Bathroom

- Fix leaks
- Clean and remove mold (check showers, tubs, sinks, toilets and inside cabinets)
- Check shower curtains for signs of mold and mildew - replace, if necessary
- Wash curtains and throw rugs in water 130 degrees or hotter
- Dust or rinse clean the exhaust fan covers

## Living Room

- Remove clutter
- Dust ceiling fans and electronics
- Vacuum/mop under all furniture
- Use a **CERTIFIED asthma & allergy friendly**® Vacuum on furniture
- Wash curtains and rugs in water 130 degrees or hotter
- Replace filters in air cleaners
- Keep vents on in fireplaces. Open windows and doors for further ventilation
- Remove traditional scented candles and potpourri and replace with beeswax, soy or battery powered ones
- Don't use throw pillows





- Choose leather or vinyl furniture
- If possible, replace carpets with solid surface flooring

## Kitchen

- Fix leaks from your sink, dishwasher and refrigerator water line
- Remove mold (check sinks, inside cabinets, produce bins, trash cans and refrigerator seals)
- Clean the tops of cabinets and vent hood often
- Wash curtains and rugs in water 130 degrees or hotter
- Clean your garbage disposal with baking soda and white vinegar
- Use lids on trash cans
- Throw out old produce before it grows mold
- Don't let dirty dishes pile up

## Cleaning

- Use unscented or homemade cleaners or use a **CERTIFIED asthma & allergy friendly®** household cleaner
- Avoid high VOC products. Look for products labeled low VOCs and only use them in well-ventilated areas
- Avoid aerosol cleaning products

## Allergy Triggers

### Mold

- Use central air conditioning or a dehumidifier with distilled water
- Fix leaks and remove sources of dampness
- Make sure rainwater drains away from your house
- As you remove flood damage and storm debris, wear a mask with a particulate respirator with NIOSH and N95 or P100 printed on the mask



## Dust Mites

- Wash bedding weekly in water 130 degrees or hotter
- Wash rugs in water 130 degrees or hotter
- Have someone without a dust mite allergy clean your bedroom
- Cover mattresses and pillows with **CERTIFIED asthma & allergy friendly®** mattress and pillow protectors
- Use dehumidifier to keep the humidity in your home under 50% Clean carpets and fabric furniture at least weekly
- Use a **CERTIFIED asthma & allergy friendly®** air filter in your air conditioner and/or furnace, and consider **CERTIFIED asthma & allergy friendly®** whole-home air cleaner
- Use special vacuum cleaners to keep mites and mite waste from getting back into the air
- Avoid wall-to-wall carpeting, if possible
- Every four weeks, place soft toys (only ones that don't have electronic elements) into the freezer for 24 hours and then cold wash.

## Pollen

- Keep all windows closed and use a **CERTIFIED asthma & allergy friendly®** air filter in your air conditioner or heating system. Set your car's air conditioner to recirculate
- After spending time outside, change your clothes as soon as you come in
- Shower and shampoo your hair each night before bed so you don't get the pollen on your pillow
- Keep pollen out of your bed by using **CERTIFIED asthma & allergy friendly®** bedding and wash it weekly in water 130 degrees or hotter
- Follow your allergy treatment plan: take daily prescription or over-the-counter allergy medicine, use nasal rinses to remove pollen from your nose and ask your doctor about allergy shots

## Other

### In the Workplace

- Place doormats at entrances to reduce allergens, such as pollen, from being brought in
- Have cleaning staff use scent-free cleaners
- Restrict staff from wearing perfume, cologne or scented personal products
- Keep trash in tightly covered containers to deter pests. Empty trash often
- Use CERTIFIED **asthma & allergy friendly**® filters on air conditioner and change them regularly
- Keep doors and windows closed from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. when pollen counts are high
- Monitor humidity levels and use CERTIFIED **asthma & allergy friendly**® dehumidifiers if necessary
- Fix leaks promptly
- Remove wet carpeting if not dry within 24 hours. Replace carpeting with CERTIFIED **asthma & allergy friendly**® hard surface flooring, if possible
- Vacuum rugs and carpets with CERTIFIED **asthma & allergy friendly**® vacuum when employees with asthma aren't around
- Use pesticides when people with asthma are not present. Use a company that is Integrated Pest Management (IPM) certified
- Post signs reminding employees to wash their hands to prevent the spread of colds and infections
- Air out new office furnishings before bringing them into work areas. Press wood and plastic laminated products can release VOCs
- Prevent outdoor fumes from coming inside. Don't allow buses, cars and delivery trucks to idle on premises
- Keep outdoor landscaping free of fallen leaves and cut grass