



**Observe:**

Type of dwelling:

- Single Family Home
- Multi-unit complex (includes duplexes, townhouses and apartments)
- Trailer
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**Comments:**

\_\_\_\_\_



**INTRODUCTION**

Why don't we have a seat while I ask you a few questions. During this asthma trigger check-up, I will be **walking with you** through several rooms in your home. I will be looking for things that are known to be common asthma triggers such as **dust, pet hair, tobacco smoke, mold, and pests**.

I will be giving you a copy of the checklist of asthma triggers so that we can review them together. I will record my observations of any common asthma triggers found in these areas. During this process I will also recommend action steps you can take to help reduce or eliminate some of these triggers. At the end we will discuss which of these changes you feel you may be able to make.

In looking for these triggers I may need to look under sinks in the kitchen or bathrooms. I will only enter areas that I have **permission** to enter and only with you **present**.

I would like to ask you some general questions about your home. Following that, I would like to begin the asthma trigger check-up by looking at the room where the child sleeps because that's where children spend the most hours during a day. This will be our priority area because it has been found that triggers reduced in the child's sleeping area can make a very positive impact on the health of a child with asthma.

Is this all right with you?

## HOME ENVIRONMENT

**Ask:**

Is this your first asthma trigger check-up?  Yes  No  Unsure

**Comments:**

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**Explain:**

A higher number of persons in the home may increase the number of triggers in the home.

**Ask:**

How many adults live in the home? \_\_\_\_\_

How many children (ages 18 and under) live/spend time in the home? \_\_\_\_\_

**Comments:**

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## Common Asthma Triggers

### TOBACCO SMOKE




**Ask:**

Does anyone smoke tobacco inside the home (cigarettes, cigar or pipe)?

- Yes      If yes, how often?       Rarely       Daily  
 No      **If no, then skip**  
 Don't know

**Trigger Fact: Smoke from a burning cigarette, pipe, or cigar can cause asthma or trigger an asthma episode.**

**Recommendations: (Select one or two to share)**

-  If possible, make the commitment not to smoke in your home or car and ask others not to either.
-  Let your relatives and friends know just how harmful cigarette smoke is to people with asthma.
-  If you want information on how to stop smoking, I can give you referrals to smoking cessation programs in this area. (Optional tip to share)

**Comments:**

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**Goals:**

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## DUST AND SOOT






**Trigger Facts:** Dust and soot are common asthma triggers. Heating sources can circulate dust or soot throughout a home. Using the oven, burners (eyes), can release fumes into the air and can be a fire hazard if used as a heating source. In warmer months outside dust can get in through windows, open doors, etc.

### Ask:

What is your heat source during the cold season? (check all that apply)

- Radiator                       Forced air furnace (central heat)                       Wood stove
- Fireplace                       Space heater                       Wall Heater
- Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- Could not determine

### Recommendations:

-  Dust with a damp cloth (special sprays or polishes aren't needed)
-  Keep wall heaters free of dust
-  Change furnace filters (if has central heat)
-  Keep heating ducts clean (if has central heat)
-  Minimize use of the fireplace to control dust and soot

### Comments:

\_\_\_\_\_

### Goals:

\_\_\_\_\_

## PETS

### Ask:

Do you have pets?                       Yes                       No    **If no, then skip this section.**





If yes, what kind? \_\_\_\_\_ How many? \_\_\_\_\_

Are they kept?                       Indoors                       Outdoors

If you have pets and they are kept indoors, are they allowed to be on fabric-covered furniture, carpets, and/or stuffed toys?                       Yes                       No

**Trigger Facts: Pet's fur, skin flakes, urine, and saliva can all be asthma triggers.**

### Recommendations:

-  If you have pets, try to keep them outdoors.
-  Wash the child's hands and face after touching pet(s).
-  If possible, washing the pet weekly can help.
-  Do not let pets in the bedroom and other sleeping areas where the child spends a good deal of time. Keep the doors to these rooms closed to keep pets out.

- 👉 Don't let the child with asthma clean litter boxes or animal cages without adult supervision.
- 👉 Some families find new homes for pets if they are found to be a major source of asthma triggers for a child.

**Comments:**

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**Goals:**

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***∴ Can we now begin the walk through portion of the asthma trigger check-up by looking at the room where the child sleeps? As I stated earlier, it has been found that triggers reduced in the child's sleeping area can make a very positive impact on the health of a child with asthma.***

## CHILD'S BEDROOM or SLEEPING AREA

### DUST MITES

**Trigger Facts: Dust mites are common asthma triggers that live in ALL HOMES!!**

- 👉 Dust mites are so small they cannot be seen with the naked eye.
- 👉 They belong to the same family as the spider.
- 👉 They live in mattresses, pillows, carpets, fabric-covered furniture, bedcovers, clothes, and stuffed toys.
- 👉 It is estimated that 2 million of them live in the average bed!

**Ask:**

Where does the child usually sleep?  Bedroom  Living room or other area

**Observe:**

What does the child sleep on?

Bed  Couch  Mattress on floor  Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**Ask:**




Are the covers and sheets washed at least once a week in hot water?

Yes  No

Is the pillow washable?  Yes  No

**Recommendations (Bedding):**

- 👉 Choose washable bedding.
- 👉 Wash pillow cases, sheets, blankets and bedspreads in hot water once a week - **cold water will not kill dust mites**, with fragrance free detergents and avoid scented dryer sheets.
- 👉 Dry completely in a clothes dryer (if hang outside, can attract pollen and other pollutants).



-  Cover the child's mattress and pillow in a dust-proof zippered cover.
-  If the mattress is on the floor, raise it.
-  If the child sleeps on upholstered furniture such as a sofa, cover furniture with washable slipcovers or sheets and vacuum furniture regularly (including removing cushions and vacuuming in cracks and crevices).

**Observe:**






Approximate number of stuffed toys in the room:

- 0-4 (If none, skip this section)     5-10     >10     Could not determine

**Ask:**

-  Which of the stuffed animals is the child's favorite?
-  Do they sleep with any of the stuffed toys?

**Recommendations (If the child does have them):**

-  Place them in the freezer for 24 hours.
-  You can also **wash them in hot water once a week – dry completely.**
-  Store them in a closed toy chest.
-  If the child sleeps with the toy. The toy should be enclosed during the day, and only taken out only at bedtime.
-  Avoid fabric or stuffed toys which provide a home for dust mites.

**Comments:**

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**Goals:**

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**Floor Covering**










**Trigger Facts:** Dust and dust mites are common asthma triggers. Dust mites burrow deep into carpet fibers and furniture.

**Observe:**

Type(s) of floor covering:

- Wall to wall carpeting     Hardwood floor     Tile or linoleum     Throw rugs  
 Cement     Could not determine     Other (please specify)\_\_\_\_\_

**Recommendations:**

-  Mop hard surface floors regularly.
-  If possible remove carpeting.
-  Wash throw rugs regularly **in hot water. Dry completely.**
-  If carpeting or rugs are present, vacuum thoroughly and slowly at least once a week.
-  If possible, use a vacuum cleaner with a high efficiency filter.
-  Someone besides the child should vacuum, sweep, empty the dust canister and change the vacuum bag (adults with asthma should wear a dust mask).
-  Clean baseboards regularly using a damp cloth with warm, soapy water.
-  Try not to allow child to jump on furniture or roll around on carpeted floors.
-  The child with asthma should stay out of rooms when they are being cleaned.





## Window Covering

### Observe:

Type(s) of window coverings:

- Curtains     Drapes     Blinds     Shades     Could not determine  
 Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

### Recommendations:

-  Dust windowsills, blinds, and shades regularly using a damp paper towel or cloth with warm, soapy water. Dry completely.
-  Vacuum drapes regularly with dusting brush.
-  Wash and dry curtains regularly.
-  If possible, replace curtains or drapes with plastic, vinyl, wood, or aluminum blinds


## Heat Source

### Observe:

Presence of heating source in child's room?:  Yes     No     Could not determine

If yes, is child's bed close to this heating source?  Yes     No     Could not determine

### Recommendations:

-  Move bed or furniture where child sleeps away from heating vents in order to prevent exposure to dust circulated through the vents.

## Other Common Triggers




**Trigger Facts: Mold, pests and cockroaches are common asthma triggers. Mold and mildew grow in areas that are dark, humid and have poor ventilation. Droppings or body parts of pests including cockroaches and rodents are common asthma triggers. Strong scents from candles, perfumes and grooming products can also trigger an asthma episode.**

### Observe:

Is any of the following present in the child's sleeping area?

- Mold on: walls, behind beds, or around windows in closets  
 Food debris                       Clutter on floors, surfaces or walls                       Plants  
 Overflowing trash can                       Cockroaches stains                       Roof or window leaks  
 Scented candles                       Perfumes and/or grooming products  
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### Recommendations:

-  Scrub mold off hard surfaces with detergent and water. Dry completely.
-  Move furniture away from walls.
-  Wipe windows when there is a lot of condensation (moisture) to prevent mold growth.

- 🔧 If there is still mold in the ceiling tiles, carpet, or sheetrock consider consulting the landlord or a professional to see if needs to be replaced. Dry surfaces completely before painting or caulking (*both caulking and painting can also be asthma triggers without proper ventilation!*).
- 🔧 Don't let plants accumulate standing water that can grow mold.
- 🔧 Repair leaky roofs or windows to remove water source that helps mold and mildew grow.
- 🔧 To eliminate unwanted pests, don't leave food or garbage out.
- 🔧 Avoid clutter on floors, surfaces and walls. Avoid pennants, pictures, flower arrangements or other dust catchers on walls.
- 🔧 Avoid using scented candles and perfumes
- 🔧 Use unscented grooming products.

**Comments:**

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**Goals:**

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**KITCHEN**

**Ventilation**

**Observe:**

Is there a ventilation hood over the stove?  Yes  No  Could not determine

**Recommendation:**

- 🔧 When cooking, open a window or use the exhaust fan over stove when there is excessive moisture in the room.

**Under Sink**

**Pesticides & Cleaning Products**

**Trigger Fact: Strong scents and fumes from household cleaning products and pesticides can be triggers for asthma.**

**Ask:**

Where do you store your cleaning products and pesticides?

Do you mind showing me where they are?

**Observe:**

Are sprays, pesticides, cleaning products, securely stored under the sink?





Yes  No



Is there clutter under the sink?  Yes  No

Are there visible leaks under the sink?  Yes  No

**Recommendations:**

-  Reduce clutter under the sink, this provides a good hiding place for pests.
-  Consider using less toxic cleaning products such as baking soda, mild solutions like vinegar and water. (Give Clean-It! Guide)
-  Make sure that the cleaning products and pesticides are securely stored.
-  Roaches, rats and other pests need water. Mold also needs moisture to grow. Fix leaky plumbing or other sources of water.

**Pests**




**Trigger Facts: Droppings or body parts of pests including cockroaches and rodents are common asthma triggers.**

**Observe:**

**Are any of the following present?**

- Overflowing trash can
- Cockroaches stains
- Food debris
- Mess on the floor
- Clutter on the surfaces
- Roof or window leaks

**Recommendations (Tips):**

-  To eliminate unwanted pests, don't leave food or garbage out anywhere in the house, and always store food in airtight containers.
-  Wet mop floors at least weekly.
-  Use boric acid powder that is non-toxic to pets and is not an aerosol. Other options include poison baits or traps rather than pesticide sprays. If you do use sprays, limit spraying to the infected area and follow the instructions on the label. Also, make sure that there is plenty of fresh air when you spray, and keep the person who has asthma out of the room.

**Comments:**

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**Goals:**

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**BATHROOM**

**Observe:**

Is there an exhaust fan?  Yes  No  Could not determine

Do you see or smell mold or mildew in bathtub, shower, walls or windows?





- Yes
- No
- Could not determine

Are windows used for ventilation?  Yes  No  Could not determine

Is there evidence of water damage, moisture, or leaks?

- Yes       No       Could not determine

**Recommendations:**

-  Mold and mildew grow in areas that are dark, humid and have poor ventilation.
-  Open a window when showering or install a fan.
-  Wash or replace shower curtains and bath mats if moldy.
-  Scrub mold off hard surfaces with detergent and water. Dry completely. If there is still mold in the ceiling and/or floor tiles, carpet, or sheetrock, consider consulting the landlord or a professional to see if needs to be replaced. Replace ceiling tiles, carpet, or sheetrock if mold is present. Dry surfaces completely before painting or caulking. Both caulking and painting can also be asthma triggers without proper ventilation.

**Comments:**

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**Goals:**

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***∴ This brings us to the end of the walk through, why don't we have a seat and review the findings of the check-up. The next page will have a summary of the items we discussed.***



## COMMON ASTHMA TRIGGER REDUCTION STEPS

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### **Tobacco Smoke**

- No longer allows smoking in home or car.

### **Dust and soot**

- Dust with damp cloth or paper towel.
- Keep wall heater free from dust.
- Change furnace filters, keep heating ducts clean, or minimize use of a fireplace.

### **Pets**

- Keep pets out of the child's bedroom or sleeping area, keeping doors closed when possible.
- Keep pets outdoors.
- Regularly wash the child's hands and face after touching pet(s).
- Wash the pet weekly.
- Remove pet from home.

### **Child's Bedding**

- If the mattress is on the floor, raise it.
- Change to washable bedding.
- Wash pillows cases, sheets, blankets and bedspreads in hot water once a week.
- Dry bedding completely in a clothes dryer instead of line drying.
- Cover the child's mattress and/or pillow in a dust-proof zippered cover.
- Vacuum furniture regularly and remove cushions to get in-between cushions and cracks.
- Cover furniture with washable slipcovers or sheets.

### **Stuffed Toys**

- Put stuffed toys in the freezer for 24 hours, and/or wash them in hot water once a week making sure to dry completely.
- Store stuffed toys in a closed toy chest.
- Avoid fabric or stuffed toys.

### **Floor Coverings**

- Mop hard surface floors regularly.
- Vacuum carpets, area rugs, and floors regularly.
- Use a vacuum cleaner with a high efficiency filter.
- Wash throw rugs regularly.
- Clean baseboards regularly using a damp cloth with warm, soapy water.
- Keep the child with asthma out of rooms when they are being cleaned.
- Keep child from jumping on furniture or rolling around on carpeted floors.
- Try and remove carpet.

### **Window Coverings**

- Wash and dry curtains regularly.
- Dust windowsills, blinds, and shades regularly using a damp cloth with warm, soapy water.
- Vacuum drapes regularly.
- Replace curtains or drapes with plastic, vinyl, wood, or aluminum blinds.

**Heat Source**

- No longer use an oven, eyes or candles as a source of heat.
- Move bed or furniture where child sleeps away from heating vents.

**Under Sink**

- Remove clutter from under sink.
- Keep cleaning products and pesticides securely stored.
- Consider using less toxic cleaning products.
- Fix or talk to landlord about fixing leaky plumbing to keep pests and mold away.

**Ventilation**

- Open a window or used the exhaust fan over stove when cooking.

**Pests**

- Put away food and take the garbage out regularly.
- Always store food in airtight containers.
- Wet mop floors at least weekly.
- Use boric acid powder, poison baits or traps to control cockroaches.

**Bathroom**

- Open a window when showering or installed a fan.
- Scrub mold off hard surfaces with detergent and water.
- Replace or talk to landlord about replacing ceiling tiles, carpet, or sheetrock if mold was present.

**Other trigger reduction activities**

- Remove standing water in plants.
- Repair or talk to landlord about fixing leaky roofs or windows.
- Remove clutter on floors, surfaces or walls.
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**Family Trigger Reduction Goals**

**Ask:**

Of the recommendations we just reviewed, which two or three goals do you feel you will be able to accomplish over the next few weeks?

Goal 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Goal 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Goal 3: \_\_\_\_\_

Date & Time For Follow-up: \_\_\_\_\_

If you have any additional questions, please call the Contra Costa Health Services Asthma Program at (925) 313-6764. You may also leave a message for either of us at that number and we will return the call as soon as possible. Thank you for your time, and you will be hearing from us within the next week or so.

**Family Trigger Reduction Goals  
(Advocate Copy)**

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**Ask:**

Of the recommendations we just reviewed, which two or three goals do you feel you will be able to accomplish over the next few weeks?

Goal 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Goal 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Goal 3: \_\_\_\_\_

If unable to identify any goals, what were the reasons? \_\_\_\_\_

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When do you think we should come back for a follow-up visit?

\_\_\_ 2 Weeks      \_\_\_ 3 Weeks      \_\_\_ 4 Weeks

Date & Time For Follow-up: \_\_\_\_\_

Is it ok if I call you in a week or two to see how you are doing?

yes       no

If you have any additional questions, please call the Contra Costa Health Services Asthma Program at (925) 313-6764. You may also leave a message for either of us at that number and we will return the call as soon as possible. Thank you for your time, and you will be hearing from us within the next week or so.

**Advocates Please Fill Out And Return To The Office:**

What information was left with the family ?

**Resource Information**

- Asthma Brochure ( Which Language?    \_\_\_ English    \_\_\_ Spanish    \_\_\_ Laotian)
- Contra Costa Health Services Medical Program Information
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Additional Comments:**

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