

Asthma is serious. But it doesn't have to control your life. The first step to taking on asthma is understanding your symptoms—and what triggers them.

COMMON SIGNS OF ASTHMA INCLUDE:



A cough especially one that's worse at night or early in the morning



A whistling sound when you breathe called wheezing



A feeling of tightness in your chest like someone is squeezing or sitting on you



Trouble breathing feeling like you can't catch your breath, can't breathe out, or are breathing more shallow or faster than usual

Symptoms can vary between people, and at different times of the day or year.

Even if your symptoms are usually mild, or don't happen all the time, they can still stop you from doing the things you want to do—and can flare up suddenly and get worse quickly. So it's important to always take asthma seriously.

TAKE THE NEXT STEPS IN TAKING ON ASTHMA:

- Learn more about asthma, its triggers, symptoms, and treatment options at: www.cdc.gov/asthma/faqs.htm
- Talk to your doctor about your asthma symptoms and medications that may help
- For more information and a printable version of this brochure, visit the Vermont Department of Health's Asthma Program online: www.healthvermont.gov/prevent/asthma

BREATHE DEEP.
LIVE BETTER.



Take on asthma
and take back your life.



TACKLING ASTHMA TRIGGERS.

Small changes at home can mean big differences in your family's breathing.

TACKLE YOUR ASTHMA TRIGGERS

An asthma “trigger” is something—like an allergy or chemical—that irritates your airways and flares your symptoms. Different people have different triggers, but there are some common ones. And there are small changes you can make to avoid them—and make a big difference in your family’s breathing.

What triggers your asthma?

To find your triggers, keep track of what seems to make your symptoms worse.

Tobacco smoke, from smoking or being around others who smoke

Mold, which can grow in homes with too much moisture

Pets—some people are allergic to the dander, urine, or saliva of dogs, cats, or other pets

Gas appliances, like stoves, washers, and dryers

Pests and pesticides—some people are allergic to the droppings of mice, rats, or cockroaches or the pesticides used to kill them

Common allergens, like pollen from trees, grass, and weeds, as well as food

Colds and flu—asthma often flares when you’re sick

Dust mites, tiny bugs you can’t see that can live in cloth, carpet, and bedding

Strong odors and fumes, like wood smoke, paint, strong cleaning products, or perfumes

How will you tackle it?

Once you know the triggers, check off what steps you will take to avoid them.

Visit 802quits.org to get help to quit smoking

Make the house and car no-smoking zones

Use a fan or open a window when showering

Install a dehumidifier

Fix—or ask the landlord to fix—water leaks

Clean up any spills or leaks right away

Keep pets out of bedrooms and off of furniture

Give the dog a weekly bath

Vacuum once or twice a week

Use a fan or open a window when cooking

Make sure gas appliances are vented to the outside of the house or apartment

Put food away quickly

Keep garbage covered and take it out regularly

Clean up crumbs and spills right away

Put out non-chemical cockroach and mouse traps

Stay inside and use an air conditioner when pollen or humidity is high

Avoid coming into contact with foods you’re allergic to

Get a flu shot each fall

Wash hands often with soap

Vacuum once or twice a week

Keep clutter out of bedrooms

Wash bedding in hot water weekly

Use “dust covers” on pillows and mattresses

Switch to fragrance-free cleaning and self-care products (like shampoos)

Avoid perfumes and perfumed sprays

Follow clean burning practices for wood stoves and research stove change-out programs if your stove is not EPA certified