

Spring Cleaning & Summer Prep with the

Breathe easy

at home program



How your patients can:

- keep homes clean without increasing lung irritation with toxic chemicals,
- keep homes cool without inhaling pollen and airborne allergens,
- contribute to healthy housing by keeping homes clean,
- manage pollen allergies, and
- prevent exposure to dust and dust mites.

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Safe Spring Cleaning

Spring cleaning can be an important part of a healthy home. But, it is important to do spring cleaning in ways that are safe and do not make asthma worse.

DO

- Use wet mopping or Swifter on smooth floors. Dry sweeping raises dust.
- Vacuum on carpets. If possible, use a vacuum with a dirt finder.
- Avoid cleaning the house when the asthmatic is home. Stirring up a lot of dust can be a trigger.
- Organize clothes and toys in clear plastic trash bags or bins to reduce dust and pests.
- Wash stuffed

animals in hot water and dry them. They can be a source of dust.

DON'T

- Use chlorine bleaches. Try non-chlorinated bleaches **diluted in water.**
- Use carpet powders and cleaners with a lot of fragrances.
- Mix cleaning products, especially ones with ammonia. This can be dangerous.
- Leave cleaners out where kids can reach them. Keep them up high or locked in a cabinet.

Inexpensive, healthy suggestions

- For scrubbing a kitchen or bathroom, *baking soda and water* are

effective and safe.

- For cleaning up counters and windows, use *white vinegar in water.*
- For cleaning silver, use *toothpaste.*
- For furniture polish, mix *olive oil and white vinegar.*
- For stains, try *borax, shaving cream or hydrogen peroxide.*

*Other safe cleaning recipes can be found on the Breathe Easy at Home website.

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Clean, Cool Indoor Air

Clean air is an effective way to prevent asthma symptoms. Airborne outdoor allergens can come into the home. Pollution is also a known aggravator of asthma. Various solutions are available including **Air Conditioners**, which control temperatures and humidity and make it possible to keep out outdoor allergens and irritants and **Dehumidifiers**, which

eliminate excessive humidity out of the home environment preventing mold growth. These can help to reduce asthma triggers in the home environment.

What many residents do not remember about these solutions, however, is that the **filters need to be cleaned regularly.**

In cooler

weather, the **same rule applies to heating systems and heating vents.**

Bathroom vents and ceiling fans should also be cleaned regularly so that dust particles are not blown back into the air.



EXCEPTIONAL CARE. WITHOUT EXCEPTION.



"If there is a problem, the inspectors will take the 'Inspectional Services Housekeeping Guide' from the Breathe Easy website to tenants."



"Since dust mites cannot drink water, they need to absorb it from the air, which is why they thrive in humid conditions."

Happy Asthma & Allergy Awareness Month!

NEW RESOURCE!

New Bostonians guide to Tenants' Rights

Boston Mayor Thomas Menino launched the You Have Rights campaign that aims to increase awareness of tenant rights!

The city's campaign includes brochures and community posters that address specific problems for that community in different languages. The campaign urges tenants with housing issues to call the mayor's hotline for assistance. More than 70 community organizations and city departments will work in the campaign.

The campaign's brochures, available in seven languages, list the "Top 10 Things New Bostonian Tenants Should Know," including the legal fees charged upon move-in, proper eviction procedures and entitlement to a 30-day notice of rent increases. Please call the Mayor's 24 hour Hotline for more information!

Mayor's 24 hour Hotline 617-635-4500

Pollen Allergy Management

Preventive Strategies

Avoid the outdoors between 5:00 and 10:00 AM. Save outside activities for late afternoon or after a heavy rain, when pollen levels are lower.

Keep windows in your home and car closed to lower exposure to pollen. To keep cool, use air conditioners.

Avoid using window and attic fans. Pollen can also be transported indoors on people and pets.

Dry clothes in a dryer rather than hanging them outside. Pollen can collect on clothing and carried indoors. Depending on your patients' allergy, they may be able to line dry clothing, as well.

If you have a grass lawn, have someone else do the mowing. If you must mow the lawn yourself, wear a mask.

Keep grass cut short.

From the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences.
<http://www.niehs.nih.gov/health/topics/conditions/asthma/pollen.cfm>

Dust & Dust Mite Prevention

Clean fabrics and other dust mite havens. The following measures will kill dust mites and reduce allergen levels:

- Wash sheets in soapy water at 130° F every one or two weeks to kill dust mites.
- Cover conventional mattresses and pillows with allergen-impermeable covers or dust mite covers (micro-porous material to prevent

infestation).

- Wash soft toys and stuffed animals regularly in hot water, followed by thorough drying. The heat will kill off the mites.
- Steam clean or beat non-washable rugs and carpets once a year. This removes large particles missed by the vacuum cleaner. Use a vacuum with a HEPA filter.

Reduce moisture and

maintain a low relative humidity in the home. Since dust mites cannot drink water, they need to absorb it from the air, which is why they thrive in humid conditions. It may not be feasible to completely eliminate dust mites from homes in moderately humid climates.

Information from the Alliance of Healthy Homes:
http://www.afhh.org/hps/hps_insects.htm

BREATHE EASY AT HOME <http://www.cityofboston.gov/isd/housing/bmc>