

## Furry and feathered animals

Animals can be a trigger for asthma. The allergens are found in their fur, feathers, saliva, skin flakes and urine. If you have a pet, bathing them often and keeping them out of bedrooms can help reduce symptoms.

## Grasses, pollens and moulds

Different types of pollen, especially grass pollen, can make asthma worse. Mould spores can also trigger symptoms, especially in damp or humid conditions. To help, check the pollen forecast, keep windows closed, and stay indoors during the middle of the day. Avoiding freshly cut grass and reducing damp areas at home can also make a difference.

## Who provides this service?

The Children's Asthma Service is provided by Manchester Local Care Organisation (MLCO). MLCO is the organisation that provides NHS community health and adult social care services in the city.

**Find out more about MLCO at**  
**[www.manchesterlco.org](http://www.manchesterlco.org)**

## Where to get more information?

### Children's Asthma Nursing Service

- **Telephone:** 0161 529 6638
- **Website:**  
[www.manchesterlco.org/childrens-asthma-service](http://www.manchesterlco.org/childrens-asthma-service)

### Asthma UK Adviceline

- **Telephone:** 0300 222 5800
- **Website:** [www.asthmaandlung.org.uk](http://www.asthmaandlung.org.uk)

### Allergy UK

- **Telephone:** 0300 222 5800
- **Website:** [www.asthmaandlung.org.uk](http://www.asthmaandlung.org.uk)

## Other languages

This leaflet can be produced in other languages or formats on request. Please contact us if you require help.

## Compliments and complaints

If you have any suggestions, comments, compliments or concerns about the services you have received, the **Patient Advice and Liaison Service** (PALS) team are here to help. You can contact the team by email at [pals@mft.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@mft.nhs.uk) or by calling them on **0161 276 8686**.

# Asthma trigger factors

## Children's Asthma Service



## Asthma trigger factors

Things that make asthma worse and increase symptoms are called **triggers**. The airways can become sore and tight when you come into contact with a trigger that irritates them.

Everyone's asthma is different, and you may already know what makes your own or your child's asthma worse.

Common triggers include:

- Colds and viral infections
- House-dust mite
- Cigarette smoke or being around others who are smoking
- Exercise and excitement
- Weather
- Furry or feathered animals
- Grasses, pollens and moulds
- Some foods (though this is rare)

Once you know what the triggers are, you can sometimes take steps to avoid them. This can be difficult, especially if you have many different triggers. Or if you are unable to avoid them all.

**In this leaflet, we outline some of the ways you can help yourself or your child.**

## Colds and viral infections

These are common triggers and almost impossible to avoid, especially in young children! But, taking a preventer inhaler often when well, will help to reduce the risk of an attack caused by a cold. Using a reliever inhaler while you have a cold will also help to keep on top of symptoms.

## House-dust mite

These are tiny creatures found around the home. Such as within carpets, bedding, soft furnishings and dust. While you can't remove them completely, here are some easy ways to reduce their presence:

- ☒ Wash bedding at 60°C once a week and vacuum the mattress occasionally.
- ☒ Keep soft toys to a minimum.
- ☒ Vacuum carpets regularly.
- ☒ Damp dust surfaces daily or use the vacuum attachment.
- ☒ Keep rooms well aired to avoid warm, humid conditions.
- ☒ Use barrier covers on mattresses and pillows.

## Cigarette smoke

Smoking and smoky environments make the airways more sensitive. This can make asthma symptoms worse. If someone in the home smokes, quitting smoking is the best way to protect everyone's health. GPs can help you access free products, advice and support to help you stop smoking for good.

## Exercise and excitement

Exercise and excitement can sometimes make you cough or wheeze, but it's important to stay active and have fun!



Always keep your reliever inhaler and spacer with you when exercising, in case you start to feel out of breath. If activities are causing problems, speak to your asthma nurse or GP.

## Weather

Weather changes like cold, windy, damp days or poor air quality can affect asthma. Be prepared!



- Check the weather forecast.
- Wrap up on cold days.
- Carry your reliever inhaler.