

SPRING & SUMMER ASTHMA TRIGGERS

Spending time outdoors in the warm weather is something to look forward to after long, cold winters. For children with asthma, spending time outside may not be as enjoyable. Summer and spring are prime times when certain asthma triggers appear more often. Below are some typical asthma triggers for the spring and summer and tips on how to help your child avoid them.

Triggers	What is it?	Tips
Air Pollution	Air pollution makes it harder to breathe and can cause other symptoms like coughing, wheezing, chest discomfort and a burning feeling in the lungs. Ozone (found in smog) and particle pollution (found in haze, smoke and dust) can affect asthma. Ozone is often worse on hot summer days, especially in the afternoon and early evening.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get to know how sensitive your child is to air pollution • Plan outdoor activities when and where pollution levels are lower • Children should go outside in the mornings and stay away from busy roads or industrial areas • Check on your child when outside and change their activity level when needed • Check the weather report; stay inside on hot, humid days • Pay attention to the air quality index; if air quality is poor, try to stay inside
Pollen	<p>Pollen is the tiny, egg-shaped cells found in flowers and some plants. It can travel through the air. When inhaled, it can cause an allergic response, such as stuffiness or sneezing. There are 3 main types of pollen:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tree pollen: Common during early spring, this is a type of light and dry pollen • Grass pollen: Appears during late spring and early summer • Weed pollen: A type of pollen that comes from weeds, including ragweed. It is often around in the late summer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is less pollen and mold in the air on rainy, cloudy or windless days because it does not move around • Keep your house and car windows closed • Use air conditioning, which cleans, cools and dries the air • Do not ask your child to cut lawns or rake leaves • Avoid hanging sheets or clothes outside to dry • Keep your house at low humidity. This helps kill and prevent mold from growing
Molds	Molds are tiny fungi that grow in wet, dark areas. They are found almost anywhere including soil, plants and rotting wood. Their spores float through the air. Molds start causing problems in early spring and reach the peak in July in warmer states and October in colder states.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check the weather. Weather reports often tell you the pollen and mold count. Have your child stay inside if the pollen and mold counts are high • Stay inside on hot, humid days • Do errands early
Activity	Being physically active can sometimes cause an asthma attack	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk with your child's doctor about the best way to be active safely • Your child should not exercise when he/she has a cold or if the air quality is bad • Be careful when playing sports. Tell your child's coach about his/her asthma

Always talk to your child's doctor about his/her asthma and when symptoms get worse. Your child's doctor will work to figure out the best way to keep your child's asthma under control during the spring and summer.

Air Quality Index (AQI)

Checking the air quality is a good way to avoid asthma attacks in the spring and summer. Use the chart below to see what your child should do depending on the air quality index.

	AQI Level	What should I do?
Good	0 - 50	Enjoy activities
Moderate	51 - 100	People who are sensitive to air pollution: Plan outdoor activities when air quality is better
Unhealthy for sensitive groups	101 - 150	Sensitive Groups: Cut back or reschedule outside activities
Unhealthy	151 - 200	Everyone: Cut back or reschedule outdoor activities Sensitive Groups: Avoid outside activities
Very unhealthy	201 - 300	Everyone: Take major cut backs on outside physical activity Sensitive Groups: Avoid outside activities

Your local news and weather station should report the air quality index. For more information on air quality or to check the AQI in your area, visit airnow.gov.

