



## We Believe in the Right to Breathe

... and we're doing something about it! Asthma is chronic ... it can be life-threatening ... and it's one of our nation's most common and costly diseases. And the severity of asthma — as well as the frequency of asthma "episodes" — can be influenced by exposures to allergens and irritants in the environment, both indoors and outdoors.

What is asthma? It's an incurable inflammatory disorder of the airways. Picture this: You're short of breath, and you're trying to fill your lungs by sucking air through a tube the diameter of a *plastic coffee stirrer*. That's the helpless, panicked feeling a growing number of people with asthma have experienced ... time and again.

### Asthma Affects Millions

- In 2003, almost **30 million Americans** had been diagnosed with asthma during their lifetime.<sup>1</sup>
- Between 1980 and 1994, the **prevalence of asthma increased 74%** among children 5 to 14 years of age.<sup>2</sup>
- In 2002, 14.7 million school days were lost due to asthma.<sup>3</sup>
- For adults, asthma is the fourth-leading cause of work loss, resulting in nine million lost workdays each year.<sup>2</sup>
- Low-income populations, minorities, and children living in inner cities **experience disproportionately higher morbidity and mortality** due to asthma.<sup>2</sup>

## Education is Critical

... and knowledge is power. Across the country, national organizations and local coalitions are working together to provide strategies and solutions for asthma sufferers and their families. It's all about learning to manage asthma.

Over the past several years, the **American Cleaning Institute<sup>SM</sup> (ACI)** has been helping educators and families who are dealing with asthma every day. ACI distributes reliable information that includes targeted, hands-on ideas for families to use at home. As the non-profit trade institute for the cleaning products industry, ACI knows that removing indoor allergens and triggers is a good first step in reducing asthma episodes.

By partnering with key asthma organizations at both the national and grassroots levels, ACI is working to assist in the long-term management of asthma ... and to improve the quality of life of people with asthma.

### Goals of Asthma Education

- Partner to raise awareness about asthma
- Empower people with asthma and their families
- Improve self-management of asthma
- Improve quality of life
- Lower healthcare costs
- Prevent asthma episodes

### ACI's Educational Efforts include ...

- Developing educational materials and strategies in partnership with **The American Lung Association** and **Emory University**, with technical guidance from **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**.
- Reaching out through local networks like **USDA/Extension Service**, **ZAP Asthma (Atlanta)**, **The New York City Childhood Asthma Initiative**, **Safe Homes/Seattle**, **Alabama Extension/Pharmacy Asthma Initiative**, and the **DC Asthma Coalition**.
- Providing intervention materials that equip families to take easy steps at home to greatly reduce the prevalence occurrence of asthma episodes.

### ACI's FREE Asthma Materials Can Help!

- **Cleaning to Control Allergies and Asthma — It's All in the Family:** A reproducible double-sided activity sheet for families that includes puzzles, games, and information on the benefits of cleaning to control asthma and reduce allergy triggers.
- **Cleaning to Control Allergies and Asthma:** A grass-roots guide developed with a community task force of families who are dealing with asthma every day. This vibrant take-home piece is available in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese.
- **The Lo-Down on Cleaning:** A comic/coloring book for use with youth, teenagers, and adults.

For more about ACI's educational efforts, or to order copies of these FREE materials, visit [www.cleaninginstitute.org](http://www.cleaninginstitute.org).

#### References

1. National Center for Environmental Health, CDC. [www.cdc.gov/asthma/asthmadata.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/asthma/asthmadata.htm)
2. National Center for Health Statistics, CDC, 2004. [www.cdc.gov/nchs/products/pubs/pubd/hestats/asthma/asthma.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/products/pubs/pubd/hestats/asthma/asthma.htm)
3. National Center for Health Statistics, Asthma Prevalence Health Care Use and Mortality, 2002, CDC. [www.cdc.gov/nchs/products/pubs/pubd/hestats/asthma/asthma.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/products/pubs/pubd/hestats/asthma/asthma.htm)



# If Your Child Has Asthma — It Doesn't Mean Your Home Is Dirty!

But it *could* mean that your child might react to asthma “triggers” in your home.

One of the trickiest parts about asthma and allergies is that most of the “triggers” — like the tiny airborne particles (allergens) that can set off an asthma episode — are hidden. But these triggers can be life-threatening for the millions of people with asthma in the United States.

There is no known “cause” of asthma — but the number of Americans with asthma has more than doubled from nearly 7 million in 1980 to 20 million in 2002.<sup>4</sup> So, *you are not alone*.

## Asthma Is a Serious Disease

- Asthma, a common chronic childhood disease in the U.S., affects more than one child in 12.<sup>4</sup>
- In 2002, there were 4,261 deaths from asthma.<sup>4</sup>

## Young Children Are at Greatest Risk

No one wants to spend the night in the emergency room with a child suffering an asthma attack. In fact, asthma accounts for *one in six* of all pediatric emergency visits in the United States<sup>5</sup> — and causes nearly 196,000 hospitalizations each year!<sup>4</sup> That's more than any other childhood disease.

## Top 5 Most Common Allergens

Most of them are hidden — in fact, they can be found in a home that looks spotless!

- Dust mites
- Animal dander (skin flakes and saliva)
- Cockroaches and their droppings
- Mold and mildew
- Pollen (from outside)



## You Can Control the Triggers

*Asthma is scary. But, while there is no sure way to prevent asthma, it is a disease that can be managed. There are some practical things you can do in your home to eliminate as many triggers as you can. And, the more you reduce asthma triggers, the easier your child will breathe.*

*Just as people with high cholesterol have to monitor their diet/fat intake more than the average person does . . . so a person working to control asthma has to work harder at eliminating the triggers. But it's possible! All it takes is commitment and a little extra time.*

### ACI's Guide Can Help Reduce Asthma Episodes . . . One Step at a Time

#### Start with an Allergen Control Plan:

- 1 Work with your regular doctor or clinic to figure out which allergens affect your child the most.
- 2 Concentrate on controlling those allergens.
- 3 Start with the easiest, least expensive options, like working to remove “triggers” in the home — especially the ones that most affect your child.

#### Put your plan into action:

- 1 Set up your room-by-room cleaning plan — starting where the person with asthma sleeps.
  - Wash bedding and curtains
  - Dust and vacuum
  - Clean windowsills and frames
  - Wet mop floors
  - Remove stuffed animals (or enclose them in a cabinet)

#### Get educated about asthma:

- 1 Learn as much as you can about asthma.
- 2 Ask your doctor or clinic for asthma education information and a written asthma action plan.
- 3 Join an asthma support group. Studies show they can help you set and reach your goals.
- 4 Keep an asthma diary to track asthma episodes.
- 5 Work with your doctor or clinic to determine other steps you need to take — such as removing carpeting from your home.



*Studies show that by limiting your child's exposure to asthma triggers when he or she is young, you may reduce the severity of his/her asthma later in life!*

## FREE Allergen Control Plan Handbook

A step-by-step guide is available to help you get started with eliminating triggers from your home. For your free copy of *Cleaning to Control Allergies and Asthma*, email to:

info@cleaninginstitute.org

Available in English, Spanish, or Vietnamese.

## Interested in Learning More about Asthma?

- American Cleaning Institute: [www.cleaninginstitute.org](http://www.cleaninginstitute.org)
- U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: [www.cdc.gov/asthma](http://www.cdc.gov/asthma)
- Allergy & Asthma Network Mothers of Asthmatics: [www.aanma.org](http://www.aanma.org)
- DC Asthma Coalition: [www.dcasthma.org](http://www.dcasthma.org)
- National Association of School Nurses: [www.nasn.org](http://www.nasn.org)
- American Lung Association: [www.lungusa.org](http://www.lungusa.org)
- ZAP Asthma/Atlanta: [www.sph.emory.edu/zapasthma](http://www.sph.emory.edu/zapasthma)
- USDA/CSREES, U.S. EPA, and Montana State University Extension Service: [www.healthyindoorair.org](http://www.healthyindoorair.org)

References 4. National Center for Health Statistics, CDC, 2004.  
5. Asthma in Children Fact Sheet, American Lung Association, 2001.



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