

Name:

Date:

Phone number:

Workshop site:

Do any household members have asthma?: YES / NO



northern california
Center for Well-Being
HEALTH EDUCATION AND WELLNESS CENTER

(707) 575-6043 • 365 Tesconi Circle, Suite B, Santa Rosa, CA 95401

In Home Self Assessment

Cigarette Smoke



- Yes No Household member/guest smokes inside the house
- Yes No Household member/guest smokes outside near doors/windows
- Yes No Household member/guest smokes outside away from property

Dust & Dust Mites



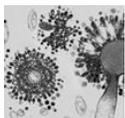
- Yes No Is there dust in corners, and on upholstered furniture
- Yes No Is there clutter and toys in corners and on floors
- Yes No Do you remove your shoes when entering your home
- Yes No Do you vacuum at least 3 times a week

Pests



- Yes No Food or garbage is left uncovered
- Yes No Have you seen signs of pest droppings
- Yes No Are there holes in the window screens

Mold



- Yes No Is there evidence of water damage, moisture, or water leaks
- Yes No Do you see or smell mildew in rooms, and/or see standing water
- Yes No When you shower or cook do you open a window or turn on the fan

Pets



- Yes No Pets live inside the home
- Yes No Is there a person living in your home with a pet allergy
- Yes No Pets sleep in the bedroom

Chemicals



- Yes No Do you use bleach products and/or oven cleaners
- Yes No Do you heat your home with your gas stove
- Yes No Does your gas stove have ventilation out of the kitchen
- Yes No Do you use pest sprays, scented products (dish soap, laundry soap, perfumes, candles, lotions, shampoos), and/or plug in air fresheners in your home

Pollen



- Yes No Is there someone in your home with pollen allergies
- Yes No Do you have and use air conditioning
- Yes No Do you open the windows in the morning
- Yes No Has the air conditioner and/or heating filter been changed within the last year

Creating Healthy Homes



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Creating Healthy Homes



Everyone knows that toxins in our environment directly affect our health. We usually think of the environment as outside of the home, but what about inside the home. Most individuals spend 80% of their time indoors which typically account for a major share of exposures to toxins such as: cleaning products, tobacco smoke, and mold. Many indoor toxins can build up in confined spaces with indoor levels reaching 10 times that of outside toxins.

Protecting our air, water, and land from environmental pollution has become a national priority, and environmental health risks in our homes also need to be addressed. Young children are at particular risk to toxins within the home due to their developing bodies.

Individuals who live in homes that are well ventilated, dry, and free of pests, poisons, and tobacco smoke will lead healthier lives and can potentially save thousands of dollars in health care costs.

The Healthy Homes Toolkit will:

- Demonstrate how to make changes that will improve indoor air quality
- Provide information on indoor air quality and asthma triggers
- Provide information on environmentally friendly products
- Offer sample policies that can be implemented in your housing complex



What is Asthma?

Asthma is a chronic lung disease that affects more than 17 million Americans. Asthma occurs when the airways in your lungs (bronchial tubes) become inflamed and constricted. The muscles of the bronchial walls tighten, and your airways produce extra mucus that blocks the passage of air in and out of the lungs. Asthma can't be cured, but its symptoms can be controlled by avoiding asthma triggers.

Asthma Triggers

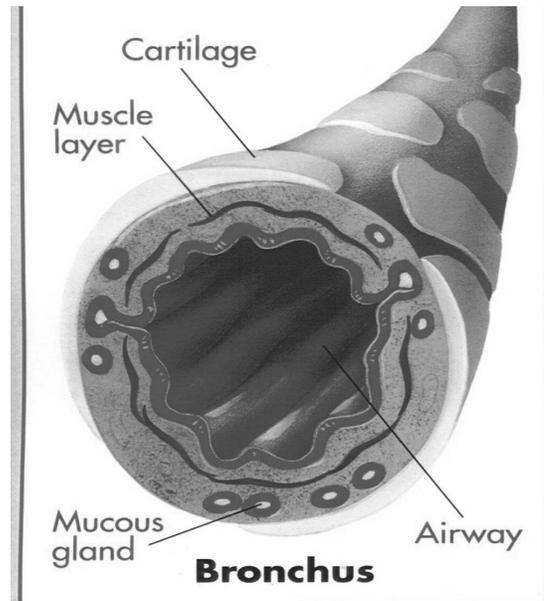
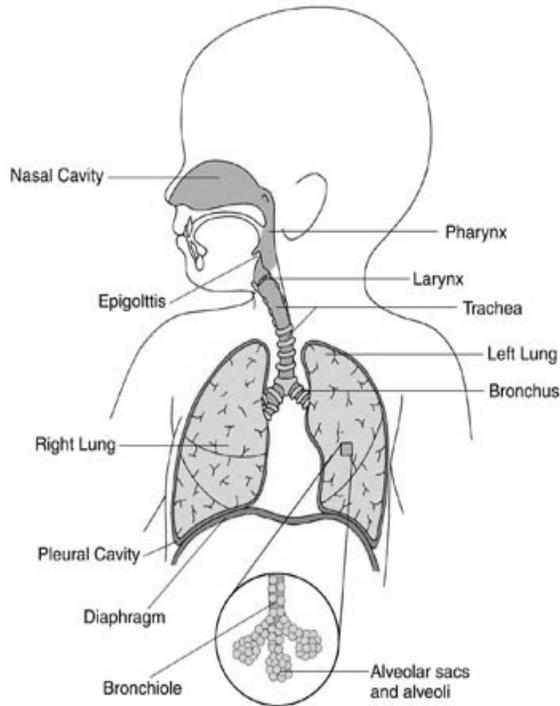
Asthma triggers are different from person to person. Exposure to various allergens and irritants can trigger signs and symptoms of asthma. Triggers may include:

- Air pollutants and irritants such as secondhand smoke
- Pollen, animal dander, mold, cockroaches and dust mites
- Infections, such as a cold or the flu
- Physical activity
- Cold air
- Medications such as: Aspirin, Tylenol, and Advil
- Strong emotions and stress
- Food preservatives
- Heartburn
- Menstrual cycle in some women
- Allergic reactions to foods such as peanuts or shellfish

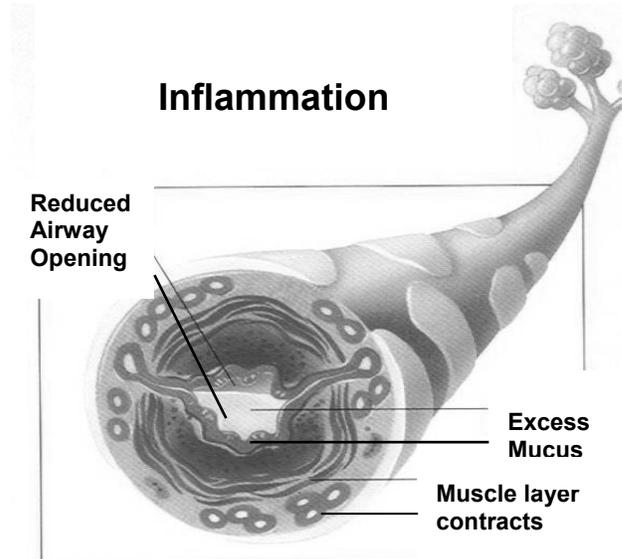
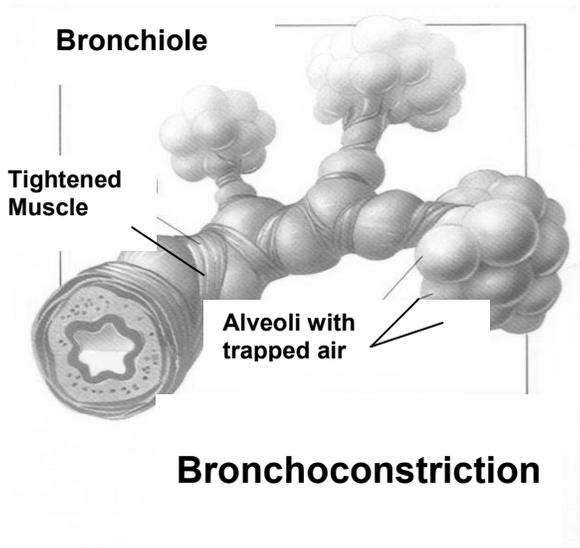
Asthma signs and symptoms range from minor to severe, and vary from person to person. Some people have mild symptoms such as infrequent wheezing, with occasional asthma attacks. Between episodes they feel normal and have no trouble breathing. Others may have signs and symptoms with frequent coughing and wheezing or have symptoms primarily at night or only during exercise.

Asthma—What happens in the lungs?

Normally, air travels comfortably through the open airways. Oxygen from the air enters the bloodstream through tiny air sacs at the end of the airways, and other invisible gases are breathed out. A thin layer of mucus lines the airways to trap and rid the lungs of unwanted particles.



When asthma occurs, there are major changes in the airways. “Rubber band-like” muscles surrounding the airways contract and squeeze. This is called “broncho-constriction.” Within six to eight hours after exposure to a “trigger,” the airway linings become inflamed. Airway linings swell and excess mucus is produced, with the total effect of making breathing difficult, trapping air in the lungs, and in extreme cases, causing death or brain damage due to lack of oxygen.



Material Provided by American Lung Association of Central California 1-800-LUNG-USA or 559-222-4800



Tobacco Smoke

Secondhand smoke (SHS) is a mixture of over 4,000 chemicals that contaminate indoor and outdoor air. Many chemicals in SHS are classified as toxic and can cause health problems such as lung disease, heart disease, and cancer.

Tobacco smoke is one of the most important indoor irritants related to triggering asthma symptoms. It can enter an apartment from the open window of a smoking tenant, or from patios and balconies and can move through light fixtures, crawl spaces, and into and out of doorways.

There has been significant progress to reduce SHS exposure in California with many apartment complexes designating smoking areas and regulating particular units or building's as smoke-free.

Actions You Can Take:

- Choose not to smoke in your home or car and don't allow others to do so.
- Choose not to smoke in the presence of people with asthma.
- Do not allow baby-sitters, caregivers or others in your home to smoke in your house or near your children.
- Talk to your children's teachers and day care providers about keeping the places your children spend time smoke-free.
- The California Smoker's helpline offers free quit information 1-800-NO-BUTTS

What's in Cigarette Smoke?



California
Smokers'
Helpline

1-800-NO-BUTTS

You may already know that nicotine is the drug in tobacco that smokers become addicted to. But did you also know that it is a colorless, poisonous chemical that farmers use as an insecticide?

Cigarette smoke has 4,000 chemicals, including:

ACETONE *Nail Polish Remover*

NAPHTHALENE *Mothballs*

INSECTICIDES *Insect Poison*

HYDROGEN CYANIDE *Gas Chamber Poison*

FORMALDEHYDE *Embalming Fluid*

BUTANE *Cigarette Lighter Fluid*

NITRO-BENZENE *Gasoline Additive*

NITROUS OXIDE PHENOLS *Disinfectant*

VINYL CHLORIDE *Makes PVC (in tennis shoes and pipes)*

CARBON MONOXIDE *Car Exhaust Fumes*

METHANOL *Rocket Fuel*

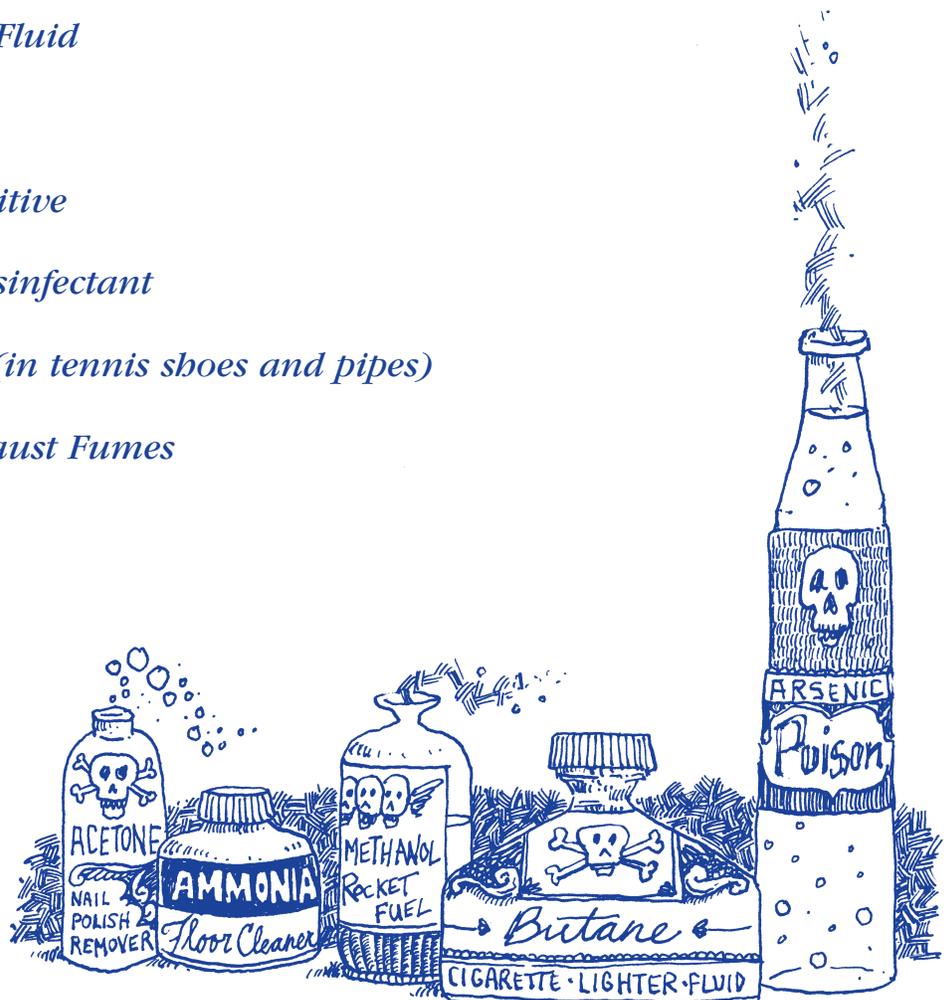
METALS *Aluminum, Lead*

AMMONIA *Floor Cleaner*

ETHANOL *Alcohol*

ARSENIC *Poison*

TOLUENE *Industrial Solvent*





Mold Basics

Why is mold growing?

Mold is a microscopic fungus that lives on plant and animal matter. Mold can be found almost anywhere; they grow on virtually any substance when moisture is present.

Molds produce tiny spores to reproduce, just as plants produce seeds. Mold spores move through the indoor and outdoor air continually. Mold is usually not a problem indoors, unless mold spores land on a wet or damp surface and begin growing. For example, mold can grow on wood, paper, carpet, tiles, and walls.

How Does Mold Affect Asthma?

Mold has the potential to cause health problems, especially for asthmatics and people sensitive to mold. Allergic responses to mold can be immediate or delayed. Inhaling or touching mold or mold spores may cause allergic reactions even in non allergic individuals such as: irritation of the eyes, skin, nose, throat, and lungs. In addition, allergic responses may include: sneezing, runny nose, red eyes, and skin rash.

There is no practical way to eliminate all molds indoors; *the way to control indoor mold growth is to control moisture*. If mold is a problem in your home, you need to clean up the mold and eliminate sources of moisture.

Actions You Can Take

- Wash mold off hard surfaces and dry completely. Absorbent materials, such as ceiling tiles and carpet, may have to be replaced if they are contaminated with mold.
- Fix leaky plumbing or other areas where there is standing water.
- Keep drip pans in your air conditioner and refrigerator clean and dry.
- Use exhaust fans or open windows in kitchens and bathrooms when showering, cooking or using the dishwasher.



Pets

Dogs, cats, mice, birds, and other mammals can trigger asthma or cause allergic reactions in sensitive individuals due to the hair, urine or saliva of warm-blooded animals.

Pet allergen levels are reported to stay at high levels in the home for several months after the pet is removed even with cleaning. Just like smoking, many property owners are deciding to designate buildings or entire properties as pet free.

Often, people sensitive to animal allergens are advised to wash their pets regularly. Recent research indicates that washing pets may only provide temporary reductions in allergen levels. There is no evidence that this short term reduction is effective in reducing symptoms and it has been suggested that during the washing of the animal the sensitive individual may be initially exposed to higher levels of allergens.

The most effective method to control exposure to animal allergens is to keep your home pet free. However, some individuals may find isolation measures to be sufficiently effective. Isolation measures that have been suggested include keeping pets out of the sleeping areas, keeping pets away from upholstered furniture, carpets, and stuffed toys. Another option is to keep the pet outdoors as much as possible and isolate sensitive individuals from the pet as much as possible.

Actions You Can Take:

- Keep pets out of the bedroom and other sleeping areas at all times and keep the door closed.
- Keep pets away from fabric-covered furniture, carpets and stuffed toys.
- Vacuum carpets, rugs and furniture two or more times per week.
- If asthma symptoms continue you may want to consider finding a new home for your pets.



Cleaning Products

Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC) are chemicals that easily evaporate at room temperature. These chemicals are found in many cleaning products such as toilet bowl cleaners, oven cleaners, furniture polish, and automatic dishwasher and laundry detergents. VOC's release toxins into our environment and contribute to the formation of ozone and/or smog. While many of these products are required for home cleaning and maintenance you can avoid them by shopping for these products, which tend to be lower or free from toxicity:

- Bon Ami
- 20 Mule Team Borax
- Murphy's Oil Soap
- Mrs. Meyer's Clean Day
- Seventh Generation
- Biokleen
- Orange or lemon oil
- Ecover

If you are unable to find these products at your local market there are key characteristics and ingredients to look for in a green cleaning product:

- Nontoxic
- Biodegradable
- Hypo-Allergenic
- Sodium citrate
- Bicarbonate
- Carbonates or Silicate
- Vegetable-based surfactants and solvents
- Reduced or no skin irritants
- Reduced or no volatile organic compounds (VOCs)
- Reduced or no added fragrance

Actions you can take:

- Use alternative environmentally-friendly products such as baking soda, vinegar, borax and Bon Ami.
- Consider fragrance-free and dye-free cleaning products for your home and laundry; they are typically lower in VOC than scented products.
- Never mix products, such as household cleaners, unless directed to do so on the label.
- Open a window or run the bathroom fan when using cleaning products



Cleaning to Control Asthma

Green Cleaning Products Non-Toxic Cleaning Substitutes

If you or your child have *asthma or allergies*, you already know that many things can bring on, or “trigger,” an asthma flareup. Some things that trigger asthma flares are called allergens. Some people get symptoms from only one allergen—like dust mites. For other people, more than one kind of allergen can trigger an asthma flare.

The most common allergens are:

- Dust
- Animal Dander
- Cockroaches
- Dust Mites
- Pollen
- Tobacco Smoke
- Mold and Mildew

Cleaning can help control these allergens. It's one of the easiest steps you can take to help reduce asthma flare-ups.

COMPLIMENTS OF:

Solano Asthma Coalition

1652 W. Texas St, Suite 102C
Fairfield, CA 94533
707 434-9685
FAX 707 427-0153
www.solanoasthma.org

KITCHEN

ALL-PURPOSE CLEANER

For countertops, kitchen and bathroom. In a spray bottle, combine equal parts white vinegar and water. Add a few drops of lemon juice for fresh scent, or a few drops of tea tree oil for disinfectant properties. Shake before using.



SCRATCH-FREE SCRUBBER

Sprinkle Baking Soda on a used lemon half and use as a scratch-free scrubber on counter tops and tiles.



DISHWASHING LIQUID

Plain liquid soap (Dr. Bronner's or Murphy Oil Soap). Add a little lemon juice or white vinegar to cut grease.



QUICK CLEANUPS

Squeeze a drop of Murphy Oil Soap on a wet washcloth and rub briskly. *Helpful Hint:* A washcloth will last longer and create less waste than a sponge.



AIR FRESHNERS

- Deodorize your trash cans by sprinkling Baking Soda in the bottom.
- Dissolve 1 TSP Baking Soda in 2 cups hot water. Add 1 TSP lemon juice. Pour into spray bottle and spray as an air freshener.

REFRIGERATORS

■ Cockroaches are often found around the refrigerator because of food spills and dampness. These spills and moisture also grow mold and mildew. Keeping your refrigerator clean is an important part of controlling allergens.



- An open box of Baking Soda in the refrigerator helps control odor. *Note:* Do not use this box of Baking Soda for baking.
- Wipe down the inside of the refrigerator with a mixture of equal parts white vinegar and water.

MICROWAVE

This helps remove lingering odors and loosen food.



- Mix 1 cup white vinegar and 1 cup water in a small bowl.
- Heat for 5 minutes.

SILVER POLISH

In 1 quart warm water, mix 1 TBSP Baking Soda with 1 TBSP salt. Add a piece of aluminum foil and item to be polished. Let sit for at least 15 minutes.

FLOORS

Mix ½ cup white vinegar with 1 gallon hot water to safely clean hardwood, linoleum, vinyl, tile, and laminate flooring.

KITCHEN SANITIZER

Use full strength white vinegar to kill germs and bacteria on kitchen counters, stoves, and cutting boards.

STAINLESS STEEL

To remove water spots from stainless steel, wipe with full strength white vinegar.

SALMONELLA AND E COLI

To kill food-borne pathogens such as salmonella or E coli, use hot, soapy water to wash all cutting boards, dishes, knives, and surfaces that have touched raw meat or eggs.



OVEN CLEANER

Make a paste with 1 TBSP Baking Soda, 1 TBSP salt, ½ cup hot water. After applying to oven surface, turn oven to 200 degrees. Cool and wipe clean.

DRAIN CLEANER

Pour ½ cup Baking Soda into drain, followed by ½ cup white vinegar. After 15 minutes, pour 2 quarts boiling water down the drain.



GARBAGE DISPOSAL

To clean the garbage disposal, grind the skins of oranges, lemons or limes in the garbage disposal with a handful of ice cubes. The citrus scent of the peel cleans the air. Why the ice cubes? The rock-hard texture of the ice cubes sharpens the blades.

WINDOW CLEANER

In a spray bottle combine 2 parts water with 3 parts white vinegar. Spray on windows and wipe with newspaper or paper towels.



(Continued on other side)



Cleaning to Control Asthma

Green Cleaning Products Non-Toxic Cleaning Substitutes

BEDROOM AND LIVING AREAS

WOOD FURNITURE POLISH

In a glass jar with a tight-fitting lid, mix 2 parts olive or vegetable oil with one part lemon juice. Shake well and apply to furniture using a clean, lint-free rag or towel. Let stand, then polish.



CRAYON MARKS

Apply white vinegar sparingly to crayon mark, rub and let dry.



CARPETS

- Vacuum at least once a week, more often if you have pets.
- If possible, use a vacuum with a HEPA filter.
- Empty the dirt bag when it's half full.
- An upright vacuum is best for carpet. They pick up a lot more dust than a canister.
- A canister vacuum is good for cleaning upholstery, draperies, blinds, and light dusting.



DUST MITES

- Use a zippered allergen-proof pillow cover and mattress cover that protects against the harmful effects of dust mites.
- Wash all bedding in HOT water cycle with detergent.
- Wash sheets weekly.
- Wash pillows at least 4 times a year.
- Wash blankets, comforters, and mattress pads at least monthly.



INSIDE PEST CONTROL

ANTS Squeeze a lemon and place lemon peel where ants are entering home.

WEEVILS To keep weevils away, hang small cloth sacks of black pepper in your pantry.

COCKROACHES Plug all small holes and cracks around the kitchen with steel wool. For a trap, lightly grease the neck of a bottle and pour stale beer into it.

BATHROOM

TOILET BOWL CLEANER

- Sprinkle Baking Soda inside the toilet bowl.
- Then add a couple drops of Murphy Oil Soap.
- Scrub with a toilet bowl brush.
- Finish outside surfaces with a wet rag sprinkled with Baking Soda.

INDOOR MOLD

Use equal amounts white vinegar and warm water to clean as well as stop mold.

CERAMIC TILE CLEANER

In 2 cups of hot water, mix ½ tsp vegetable oil based liquid soap, and 3 TBSP vinegar. Spray and wipe clean.

BATHROOM GLASS DOORS

Spray a mixture of ¼ cup white vinegar with ¾ cup hot water, then wipe. This quickly removes hard water stains.

TUB, TILE, SINK AND SHOWER

This will help clean mold as well as help stop mold.

- Use equal amounts of white vinegar and warm water to clean soap film.
- Sprinkle Baking Soda on porcelain fixtures and rub with wet rag. Add a little Murphy Oil Soap to the rag for more cleaning power. Rinse well to avoid leaving a hazy film.



TOILET BOWL DEODORIZER

- Sprinkle a few TBSPs of Baking Soda into the toilet bowl.
- Then add 1 cup of white vinegar.



MILDEW

Equal parts Borax and white vinegar. Use a household brush to work the mixture into the grout and scrub, scrub, scrub.

LAUNDRY

LAUNDRY DETERGENT

- Use ¼ cup pure laundry flakes, ¼ cup 20 Mule Team Borax, and ¼ cup water soda.



- Use perfume and dye-free detergent.
- Wash bedding in HOT water to kill dust mites.

BLEACH SUBSTITUTE

Mix ¼ cup Borax to 2 cups water. The Borax brightens colors with a mild bleaching action.

WASHING MACHINE

Clean soap scum from your washer by running it through a cycle with ½ cup white vinegar added to the water.

CLOTHES DRYER

Place a tennis ball in the clothes dryer to reduce wrinkling.



STAIN REMOVER

To remove stains from clothing, try soaking fabrics in water mixed with Borax, lemon juice, hydrogen peroxide, washing soda, or white vinegar.

BRIGHTEN CLOTHES

Add ½ cup white vinegar to the rinse cycle to brighten colors and decrease the amount of lint.

SOFTEN CLOTHES

Fabrics can be softened by adding ¼ cup Baking Soda to the wash cycle. ¼ cup white vinegar will also soften fabrics, as well as eliminate cling.



Pollen

A sure sign of spring (or summer or fall) is the arrival of outdoor allergies or hay fever. Allergens that are commonly found outdoors are inhaled into the nose and the lungs causing allergic reactions. Examples of commonly inhaled outdoor allergens are tree, grass and weed pollen as well as mold spores.

Most pollen is released early in the morning, shortly after dawn. Pollen travels best on warm, dry, breezy days and peaks in urban areas midday. Pollen counts are lowest during chilly, wet periods. Trees normally pollinate in late winter and spring, and grasses pollinate in late spring and summer.

What Is a Pollen Count?

The pollen count tells us how many grains of plant pollen are in a certain amount of air during a set period of time (usually 24 hours). Pollen is a very fine powder released by trees, weeds and grasses. It is carried to fertilize another plant of the same kind.

The pollen of some plants is carried from plant to plant by bees and other insects. These plants usually have brightly colored flowers and sweet scents to attract insects, and seldom cause allergic reactions. Other plants rely on the wind to carry pollen from plant to plant. These are the plants that cause most allergic reactions, or hay fever.

Actions You Can Take:

- Take your shoes off upon entering the house.
- Vacuum carpets, rugs and furniture two or more times per week.
- Keep windows closed during the morning and afternoon.
- Use the air-condition during allergy season
- Exercise indoors during allergy season



Creating Healthy Home Policies

Smoke-Free Policy: Multi-unit housing complexes with smoke-free policies in place provide options for renters who do not smoke and those with health problems such as Asthma. Over 84% of Californians do not smoke and recent statewide polls revealed that 82% of apartment dwellers prefer to live in a smoke-free building or unit.

- ✓ Tobacco Smoke can travel through shared ventilation, air ducts, opened doors and windows, plumbing, and electrical outlets
- ✓ Smoke-free policies dramatically reduce the aggravation of allergies and asthma.
- ✓ Smoke-free policies reduce disagreements among tenants and complaints to managers.

Pet Policy: Many individuals have pet sensitivities or allergies. Allocating some units as pet-free provides housing options for allergy sufferers. The total pet population is more than 1000 million or about four pets for every 10 people.

- ✓ Allergies to pets with fur or feathers are common, especially among people who have asthma.
- ✓ From 15 to 30 percent of people with allergies have allergic reactions to cats and dogs.

Maintenance Practices: Contacting management regarding maintenance and needed repairs will protect your unit from extensive damage that can aggravate allergies and asthma.

- ✓ Homes with leaking pipes can cause mold and aggravate asthma
- ✓ Mice can squeeze through a hole the size of a nickel! Prevent rodents from entering your home by checking inside and outside the house for gaps or holes.

