

# What starts an asthma attack?

An asthma attack is triggered by something that disturbs your lungs. These triggers can include:

- Perfume
- Feathers
- Pollution
- Pollen
- Smoke
- Roaches
- Mold
- Paint Fumes
- Animal Dander



## For additional information

New York State Department of Health  
[www.health.ny.gov/diseases/asthma](http://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/asthma)

Centers for Disease Control  
and Prevention  
[www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

Updated 1/19

Dear Neighbor,

Asthma is a serious health risk for many people in our community.



While the condition can be life-threatening, there are ways to prevent many asthma attacks. Asthma is also a leading cause of school absenteeism among children. New York State law has made it easier for students to cope with this disease by enabling children to carry an inhaler to school for the purpose of self-administering inhaler-rescue medications. In an emergency, this can save lives.

This brochure includes general information on asthma and tips for those living with this disease and their families. If I can be of additional help in this or any other matter, please do not hesitate to call me.

Sincerely,

*Simcha Eichenstein*

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Member of Assembly

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# Asthma: A serious health risk.



Courtesy of...

Assembly Member  
**Simcha  
Eichenstein**

# Take control of asthma

Asthma is a disease that affects the lungs, and if a family member has it, you are more likely to have it. Asthma is a long-term disease that can afflict both children and adults. Asthma causes repeated episodes of wheezing, breathlessness, tightness in the chest and coughing. While the cause and cure are unknown, you can control your asthma by knowing the warning signs of an attack and following the advice of your health care provider.

## About asthma

- Asthma affects an estimated 1.5 million adults and 491,000 children in New York State.
- Children in New York State miss almost 2 million days of day care, preschool or school annually because of asthma.
- Asthma is a lung disease that can be life-threatening.
- You can get asthma at any age.
- Asthma causes breathing problems, called attacks or episodes.
- Controlling the disease doesn't mean just treating attacks – it means preventing them.
- No single medication or behavior will make asthma go away, but there are ways you can control your breathing.

## If you have asthma

- Take your asthma seriously.
- See your doctor.
- Follow your doctor's instructions carefully, including taking any prescribed medication.
- Get a written treatment plan from your doctor to take the guesswork out of managing asthma.
- If asthma symptoms do not improve, see your doctor again and discuss other options.

## Kids and asthma

Asthma occurs at any age, but it commonly begins in childhood. Asthma is the most common chronic illness among school-age children nationwide and in New York State.

- Kids should be encouraged to talk about their asthma.
- Parents should educate themselves about preventive management and, in particular, preventive medications.
- You should help your child monitor his or her medication regimen.

## Exercise and asthma

Exercise is a common asthma trigger, but with proper treatment and management people with exercise-induced asthma can participate safely. Proper management requires you to take steps to prevent symptoms and carefully monitor your respiratory status before, during and after exercise.



## Some asthma triggers and how to prevent them

### Mold, dust mites:

- Clean your kitchen and bathroom regularly to get rid of indoor mold.
- Fix water leaks, which allow mold to grow behind walls and under floors.
- Use a dehumidifier to help dry up the moist air in which molds and dust mites thrive.
- Control dust mites by putting your mattresses and pillows in airtight covers.
- Don't use down-filled pillows, quilts or comforters and remove stuffed animals and clutter from bedrooms.

### Tobacco smoke:

- Parents, friends and relatives of children with asthma should never smoke around them.
- If you must smoke, only smoke outdoors, not in homes or cars.

### Pets, cockroaches:

- Cockroaches and their droppings may trigger an asthma attack. Use roach traps to decrease their number.
- With furry pets, either find them a new home or vacuum and mop often.

Sources: NYS Department of Health, including "NYS Asthma Surveillance Summary Report 2013," and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention