

Cleaning Living Areas

Clean & Healthy Housing



Keeping the bedroom and living areas clean is especially important because we spend so much time there! These are also places that can trigger breathing problems for family members with allergies or asthma. The following tips can help you keep living areas clean and help keep your family and visitors healthy.



Common Triggers for Allergies, Asthma, and Other Health Conditions

Keep your family safe and healthy by keeping living areas and bedrooms clear and clean.

Pets

Animal dander is dead skin cells and hair or feathers from pets. It can trigger asthma attacks in people who have allergies. Fleas and ticks also live on our pets and animals, and can cause problems for us if they live in our homes.

Insects/Pests

Roaches or even parts and odors of them can trigger asthma in some people.

Bed bugs are another pest that can cause itching and red bumps if they get into places where we sit or lie. Bed bugs are about the size of an apple seed. They bite to feed on our blood.

Household Chemicals

Pesticides, cleaners, perfumes, hairsprays, air fresheners, candles, and fragrant soaps or detergents can trigger asthma and allergic reactions. Remember: Clean has NO smell. Don't try to cover up dirt or odors with chemicals. Clean the best you can with the least chemicals possible.

Pollen

Pollen from trees and plants outside can trigger allergies, particularly during spring and fall. When pollen is heavy outside, keep the doors and windows closed.

Fires and Smoke

Many people are allergic to tobacco smoke, which can also cause cancer. It is best **never** to smoke indoors, in cars, near children, or around those with allergies and asthma. Wood-burning fireplaces and heaters using other fuel may also trigger asthma.

Mold and Mildew

Mold and mildew are microscopic plants that grow where it is warm and moist. Mold spores are everywhere in the air. In damp areas where they are growing and multiplying, people who are allergic to them may have trouble breathing.

Dust Mites

Dust mites are microscopic animals that you cannot see. Every home has them. They feed on skin particles, so there are more of them in places where we sit or lie, and on clothes we wear. They can trigger serious breathing problems for people who are allergic to them.

Hard Surfaces

Use a mat outside and one inside to prevent dirt from entering at the door.

Some families leave shoes in a box or place near the door to prevent tracking in dirt.

Damp mopping or dusting prevents spreading dust throughout the air.

Use a soft, slightly damp cloth to dust hard furniture, electronics, windowsills, and baseboards weekly.

Clean fans, light fixtures, and blinds monthly with a damp cloth.

Dust mites live in dust, so keep living areas free of clutter that can collect dust.

Keep closets, toy chests, drawers, and bookshelves closed to keep air free of dust mites.

Soft Furnishings

Carpets, draperies, and upholstered furniture also collect dust, although you may not see it.

Use a HEPA vacuum cleaner to clean dust and particles without spreading them into the air.

For those with asthma, choose furniture that can be wiped down.

Enclose mattresses in zippered plastic cases that can be wiped down.



Choose bedspreads and curtains that can be washed often.

Wash bedding and stuffed animals or decorative items in hot water weekly to kill dust mites.

Encase pillows, wash with fragrance-free detergent, or buy new ones often for people with asthma.

Avoid carpet and rugs or clean them often for those with breathing problems.

Clutter, Storage, and Organization

The more “stuff” you have out, the harder it is to clean or to find what you need quickly. Make a “home” for everything and keep everything in its place.

Pick it up, put it away, or throw it out without delay to keep things neat and tidy.

Keep a trash can and a mail holder where you open your mail. Toss out what is not needed and be sure to put bills and important mail in the holder.

Baskets may help to organize reading material or toys.

Keep a hamper for dirty clothes.

Immediately hang up clothes that can be worn again.

Keep toiletries in a basket or plastic carrier to make it easier to pick them up to dust or clean.

Roll up long cords and tie them or put them in a toilet paper roll to prevent trips and falls.

Keep paths clear, clutter-free, and well-lighted to prevent injury, especially for elderly family members and children.

Information Sheet 1983 (POD-04-17)

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Produced by Agricultural Communications.

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Extension Service of Mississippi State University, cooperating with U.S. Department of Agriculture. Published in furtherance of Acts of Congress, May 8 and June 30, 1914. GARY B. JACKSON, Director