



Achooo Newsletter



NORTH TEXAS ALLERGY AND ASTHMA ASSOCIATES

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Staying Healthy During Spring Cleaning

By Jeffrey Demain, MD, FAAAAI

Many people know that regular cleaning can help reduce allergy and asthma triggers in your home (such as mold, pet dander and dust mites). But you may want to pause before you reach for that spray bottle. Some people's asthma and allergies may be aggravated by the way they clean. Harsh chemicals may trigger asthma symptoms or allergies, and dust that is disturbed when cleaning can make the process a nightmare.

So what's the best way to keep your home clean and free of allergy triggers without also aggravating your symptoms? And what kind of cleaning should you do in your home? These simple steps could make a difference and may reduce your risk of developing allergy and asthma symptoms when you clean.

WHAT TO USE

Numerous products have received the "green" seal of approval and are easy on the environment. Many of these are derived from plant or natural sources rather than harsh chemicals, which can aggravate or create symptoms in people with allergies and asthma. An easy alternative to purchased cleaning products can be cleaners that you make yourself from ordinary household ingredients such as lemon, vinegar and baking soda.

WHERE AND WHAT TO CLEAN

KITCHEN

Often the center of the household, kitchens should be meticulously cleaned and sanitized.

Daily: Wipe down the sink, counters and stove top. Use an exhaust fan to remove cooking fumes and reduce moisture. Sweep or vacuum the floor. Place garbage in a can with an insect-proof lid and empty trash daily.

Weekly: Mop the floor, wipe the cabinets, backsplashes and appliances, clean cabinets and countertops with detergent and water, and check for plumbing leaks. Wipe up excessive moisture in the refrigerator to avoid mold growth. Store food—including pet food—in sealed containers, and discard moldy or out-of-date items. Empty and clean dripping pan and clean or replace moldy rubber seals around doors. Wash the dish rack, and wipe the switch plates, phone and inside of the garbage can.

Seasonally: Empty and scrub down the inside of the refrigerator and the utensil drawers. Scrub down the cupboard exteriors and clean the stove-hood filter.

LIVING AREAS

Clean carpeting weekly with a vacuum cleaner that has a small-particle or HEPA filter. Wash area rugs and floor mats, and mop hard surface flooring weekly. Use curtains made of cotton or synthetic fabric. Wash seasonally.

Keep windows closed and use air conditioning during pollen season. Clean mold and condensation from window frames and sills with a solution of chlorine bleach (3/4 cup chlorine bleach to 1 gallon of water). Always wear a protective mask when cleaning mold.

Encase pillows, mattresses and box springs in dust-mite-proof covers. Wash sheets, pillowcases and blankets weekly in 130 F water. Remove, wash or cover comforters.

Remove anything that collects dust, such as knick-knacks and books. Store toys, games and stuffed animals in plastic bins. Keep pets out of the bedroom. (Bathing animals twice a month may reduce allergens.)

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Office News:

- Allergy shot patients: We will now be creating Id cards to present at the time of your shot. This will be another safeguard
- May is National Asthma Screening Month. We will be holding an asthma screening at Plano Sport Authority on May 1st from 9 AM to 2 PM.
- We are outsourcing our billing. If you have any questions or concerns please contact Beyond Billing at 916-971-8650 or email to paragh@beyondbilling.com
- After hours, you can contact one of our doctors by calling 214-246-0253 and leaving a detailed message. The doctor will call you back.

Offices:

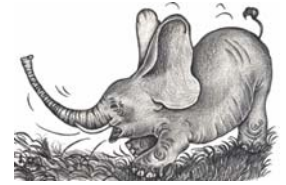
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We're on the web!
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Our staff excels at providing you and your family with personalized and excellent health care. Our emphasis involves intertwining education, medication, and proven medical modalities. We specialize in the treatment of nasal allergies, asthma, eye allergy, sinus disease, and allergic skin disorders. Our office performs the following procedures: allergy skin testing, allergy RAST testing, spirometry (pre and post bronchodilator), ear irrigation, and patch testing.

Staying Healthy During Spring Cleaning continued

By Jeffrey Demain, MD, FAACAP

Hot, humid houses are breeding grounds for dust mites and mold. Maintain temperature at 70 F and relative humidity at 30% to 50%. Clean or replace small-particle filters in central heating and cooling systems and in room air conditioners at least once a month.

Control cockroaches and mice with traps from the hardware store, or hire a professional exterminator. To prevent re-infestation, seal cracks or other entryways.

BASEMENT

In older homes, basements can be a challenge. Not only can they be damp and dusty, but they can also harbor rodents or mold. Always wear gloves and a mask when cleaning a basement that has either of these problems. If vacuuming, empty the bag outside, still wearing a mask, and place it directly into a trash bag, tie the bag, and put in the trash container immediately.

Remove moldy or water-damaged carpeting. If possible, use cement or linoleum flooring. If that isn't an option, use low-pile instead of high-pile carpeting and use a vacuum cleaner that has a small-particle or HEPA filter weekly. Install plastic sheeting (vapor barrier) under carpeting to prevent moisture seepage.

Check for and repair any sources of leaks or water damage. A dehumidifier can reduce dampness; clean it once a week. Use an exhaust fan to vent moisture from a clothes dryer outside.

MILDEW

You can wash concrete floors and walls with a solution of bleach and water. Allow the solution to sit for five minutes, then rinse and dry. Always wear rubber gloves when working with bleach or vinegar solutions.

If you have a section of carpet with mold or mildew, clean the back of the carpet with one part hydrogen peroxide to five parts water. If possible, remove the carpet and place it outside in the sun to dry. If not, prop the section up and use a fan to dry the area.

If you have mold or mildew on basement walls, you can use one of these solutions to clean, but you must also remove the moisture from the area—use a dehumidifier or fans to circulate the air—and open windows if possible.

Cleaning Option 1: Straight vinegar sprayed on the walls! Don't rinse, just air dry.

Cleaning Option 2: Mix 2 cups vinegar, 2 cups very hot water, 1/2 cup salt and 2 cups borax. Apply solution to area and allow it to sit for 30 minutes. Apply the solution again, scrubbing with a soft bristled brush and rinse well with plain water.

Spring is just around the corner—you've got all the tools you need to safely and healthfully clean your house!

