



Allergy & Asthma Network

Mothers of Asthmatics

INDOOR

AIRRepair™

AT PLAY

Inside...

- 2 Asthma and Allergy fun busters**
Keep playtime safe for little airways by watching out for these symptom-starters
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The Business of Being a Kid

Who doesn't like to play? No matter what your age, playing is great fun!

Play gives children a chance to learn about themselves and other people – how to share and take turns, how to be patient and fair, how to be a good sport. It also builds creativity, imagination and physical skills.

However, a playmate's runny nose can lead to your child's asthma attack. A simple birthday party invitation can set your mind racing about allergens, irritants and other pollutants that can make your child sick. And holidays leave family members thinking you're simply overprotective.

How do you keep asthma symptoms from interfering with fun? How do you safely let children explore the world through their own eyes, outside your protective reach?

When children with asthma can't escape the allergens, irritants and pollutants that set off breathing problems, play loses its fun. When was the last time you felt like playing when you couldn't breathe?

Children with asthma don't want to live in a bubble. They want to run



and play with their friends; go to parties and sleepovers, take dance classes and drum lessons, and simply HAVE FUN !!!

The good news is – they can, with planning and communication.

The key is to minimize risk and maximize fun.

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Sensible Crafts



No scents

Many children's products are scented – art markers, paints, crayons, disposable wipes, bubble baths, shampoos and more. However, even the unscented products may have masking fragrances that cover unpleasant odors. Masking scents added at low concentrations are not always listed on the label.



Healthy hobbies

Woodworking, sanding, using spray paints, sculpting and other creative hobbies send tiny pieces of dust into the air. The ones that fall to the ground quickly are actually less of a problem than those that stay in air for longer periods.

Whenever possible, keep indoor work or hobby spaces well ventilated and wear dust or vapor masks to protect the airways. Seal off rooms under renovation from the rest of the house: Cover air vents and seal off windows and doors with plastic.

Take stinky or dusty projects outside!



Asthma and Allergy Fun Busters

Nothing can ruin a play day at the community center or a sleepover at a friend's home faster than overwhelming exposures to these symptom-starters:

Dust mites

- in carpets, upholstered furniture, bedding, pillows and stuffed animals

Cockroaches, mice and other pests

- in family rooms and bedrooms as well as kitchens – anywhere traces of food, water and dirty dishes are allowed to linger

Mold

- wherever humidity levels are high; if you smell something musty, it's moldy

Pets

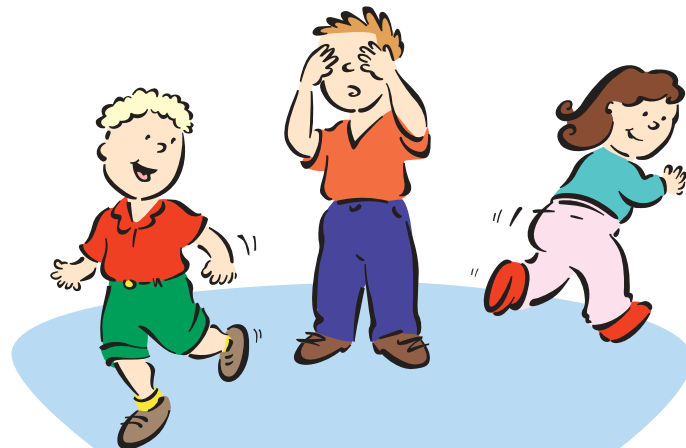
- not just dogs and cats – all furry animals produce dander, including mice, guinea pigs, gerbils, hamsters, rabbits and ferrets
- birds and reptiles – as well as their food and cages – also release allergens and irritants

Secondhand smoke

- a powerful irritant that can quickly set off coughing and wheezing

Other irritants

- strong scents, including art supplies, candles, perfumes
- dust from construction and remodeling projects
- offgassing (chemical smells) from new carpets, flooring and cabinets
- latex balloons
- pesticide sprays and toxic chemicals, often as irritating as the pests they kill



Find AIRepair solutions at
www.noattacks.org/triggers.html

AIRepair Tips from AANMA Members



Play Dates and Birthday Parties

When we go to someone's house in the winter, I always ask them not to have a fire going in the fireplace. So far nobody has seemed offended. The request usually opens a dialogue about asthma. I have found that most people don't realize the seriousness of asthma.

Beth Allen, Palatine, IL

If our son is invited to play at someone's house or go to a party, we ask about smoking; if it's not non-smoking, he doesn't go.

Gigi Gerben, Venetia, PA

Before we make a play visit, we invite the mother and child to our home. That way we have a pretty good idea of the other family's feelings about helping with exposure to things that might cause a reaction. If we don't feel good about the other family's attitude, we just politely invite the child to come to our house.

Gayle Schroader, Taylor, SC

It is really difficult if the inviting friend has a parent who smokes. We taught our children to assert themselves to ask the smoker to smoke outside because of their asthma. If that wasn't possible, our child would go to another level of the house to wait out the smoke. While that wasn't ideal, it did help. We have asked parents not to smoke while driving our children in their vehicle; they don't get offended when they understand what could happen.

Laura Smith, Dallastown, PA

When my son was invited to a laser tag party, I had no idea what it really was. When I went with him to check it out, the first sign I read was a warning to patients with asthma that there is a fog that the players run around in that could be

hazardous. We sat down and did a treatment prior to the game, just in case, and I talked to several of his buddies who agreed to keep an eye on him. I was very nervous, but his friends were wonderful and very proud to have been given such an important task which they took very seriously. I generally hang around quite a few parties and help. A lot of parents appreciate an extra hand or the peace of mind that you are there. If I don't stay, I definitely go over all the medications and ask a lot of questions on what will be eaten.

Andrea Holka, Malcolm, NE

Slumber Parties and Overnights Away from Home



For parties, we send her own blankets and pillow with an allergy pillow cover on it, request she does not sleep on carpeted floor, make sure she takes all her meds with her, and wash all her bedding and clothing when she comes home. For family vacations, we make sure there are no feather pillows in motel rooms and do not use the big comforter on tops of beds.

Cindi Shea, RN, BA, AE-C, Beckley, WV

Parties and sleepovers can be stressful. To make sure our daughter enjoys the event without worry we make sure the host of the event thoroughly understands the significance of her allergies and understands what measures to take if an outbreak begins. If we are still not comfortable, we go to the event with her or do an alternative "special outing" of her choice.

Michael Cason, Centreville, VA

When he goes to a friend's home overnight or just to birthday parties he always carries his inhaler. We let the adults in charge know about his asthma and they always know how to reach us if he has a problem. Our son has never been embarrassed or had problems with anyone; in fact, he will tell you anything you need to know about asthma and why he has to do what he does every day to stay healthy.

DaLynn Walker, Windsor, CO

Community Center Classes and Events



I have my daughter enrolled in ballet, swimming and basketball classes. Since she needs a change of clothing for each of these activities, I separate them into sealed plastic bags inside of her individual carrying bags. I do this to prevent any allergens from accumulating inside gym lockers, since you don't know what gets thrown inside those lockers.

Ivette Davila-Richards, Brooklyn, NY

Our daughter takes karate and gymnastics, both held indoors. To prevent problems, we tote our 'medicine bags' everywhere. These are insulated (particularly important on an extreme weather day) lunchbags that easily hold all the necessary medicines. The pocket on the outside holds an emergency letter listing her medications, doses and times to be given.

Donna Biroczky, Fontana, CA

Our sons wanted to join a children's bowling league after school on Mondays. To our dismay the parents' smoking became a huge problem

for them. They approached the manager and told her that the smoke left them sick and had even led to an ER visit. They talked her into requiring the parents to keep the general bowling area smoke-free during the children's league time. Others could go outside or to the enclosed bar area to smoke. "No smoking" signs were posted each Monday and parents caught lighting up were asked to leave.

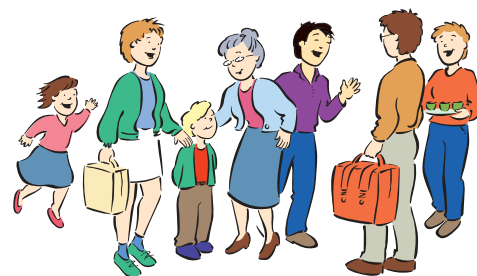
Maureen Damitz, Chicago, IL



Travel

When we visit relatives we bring along our son's dust-mite-proofing gear – including mattress cover, pillows and blankets. Often our family and friends understand how sensitive he is to dust and take the extra initiative to specially dust-proof the bedroom or even the entire house for him. When renting a vacation home, we always request accommodations that have no animals or smoking allowed, with a minimum amount of carpet.

Jennifer Frey, Millbrae, CA



We contact hotel managers and museums before a trip to find out if there is any painting going on. If so, we don't go. Once, a museum manager told us there was a small amount of trim being painted. We explained our situation and she sent the painters out of the building to return on a day when the museum would be closed. Because of the excellent ventilation system, we were able to enjoy the museum with the boys and no one could tell that there had been any painting done earlier that day.

Gayle Schroader, Taylor, SC

Fun-tastic Activities

Just for Kids

Word Jumble

Unscramble the words, then unscramble the circled letters to answer the clue.



T I **B** H A
X **E** I T
E N A L I **H**
X A H L **E** E
W **R** A A Y I
M **A** R S T
H M A S A **T**

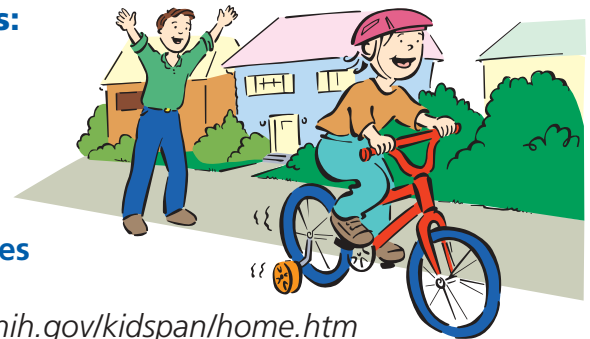
Clue:

What clean air helps you do...

Check out these additional "kids" resources on environmental controls:

Environmental Kids Club
www.epa.gov/kids

National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences
www.niehs.nih.gov/kids/
Spanish kids page: www.niehs.nih.gov/kidspan/home.htm



Answers to Word Jumble: Habit, Exit, Inhale, Exhale, Asthma, Smart, Airway, Smart, Asthma
Answer to the Clue: Breathe



Welcome to Breatherville, USA!

Where learning about allergies and asthma is a positive experience!



Copies of the **Indoor AllRepair™ at Play** newsletter can be downloaded at breatherville.org/playtime.



Visit breatherville.org or call us at 800.878.4403