

# **10 Step**

## **Cleaning to Control**

### **Allergies and Asthma**

The Environmental Protection Agency and its Science Advisory Board have consistently ranked indoor air pollution among the top five environmental risks to public health. Also, according to the American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology, 50% of all illnesses are caused or aggravated by polluted indoor air.

Over 40 million Americans suffer from allergies due to home bio-pollution. If you or your child has allergies or asthma, you already know that many things can bring on, or “trigger and asthma flare or episode. Some things that trigger asthma attacks 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 episode.

## **STEP 1**

### **Start with an Allergen-Control Plan**

1. Work with your regular doctor or clinic to find out which allergens affect your child or you the most. If asthma flares happen a lot your doctor may suggest medication or life style changes. Keep an asthma diary.

2. Concentrate on controlling the allergens.

3. Start with the easiest, least expensive ways, like cleaning. Set up your cleaning plan one room at a time, beginning with where the allergy-sufferer sleeps. For example:

- Wash bedding and curtains
  - Dust and vacuum
  - Have your carpet cleaned professionally and treated Anti-Allergen Treatment-every six months
  - Clean window sills and frames
  - Wet mop hard surface floors

## **STEP 2**

### **Bedrooms**

Every home has dust mites. You can't see them but they are there. They feed on our skin flakes, as we shed about two pounds each year. We spend about a third of our lives in bed so most dust mites are in our pillows, bedding, and bedroom carpets. You can control them by keeping bedding clean and controlling dust. Dust mites in the bedroom are a trigger for people with allergies and asthma.

Use special mite-proof covers to keep dust mites from getting into pillows. They are sometimes called "allergen-impermeable". If you don't use covers, wash pillows at least 4 times a year, and replace them every year.

Mattresses should be cleaned every six months by a professional cleaner using an extraction method to reduce allergens. A professional cleaner can also apply a neutralizing spray to reduce allergen irritants between regular cleaning. Regular cleaning of carpets & upholstery should be part of your allergen control plan.

**Call Eco Clean at 865-691-5556**

### **Warmth + Moisture+ Skin= Dust Mites**

- \* Wash sheets weekly in hot water-Treat once a month with Anti-Allergen rinse
- \* Wash pillows at least 4 times a year (unless you use a mite proof cover)
- \* Wash blankets and comforters at least monthly
- \* Professionally clean mattresses at least every 6 months.
- \* Use room air filter devices

## **STEP 3**

### **Bathrooms**

Mold and mildew are time plants that grow where it's warm and damp-like in the shower. They release invisible "spores" into the air. The floating spores trigger allergy and asthma episode. And wherever they land, the spores start growing new mold.

### **Warmth + Moisture= Mold**

Mold can also grow on appliances-like air conditioners, dehumidifiers and humidifiers. Follow manufacturer's instructions to change filters and clean regularly.

To find products that remove or control mildew-read the label. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for wearing protective equipment if required. You can use an antibacterial product two or three times a week to prevent mold from coming back.

- \* Clean shower stall and bathtubs weekly
  - \* Clean soap scum weekly as mildew grows on it

- \* Wash shower curtains monthly
- \* Wipe up water around tubs and showers daily
- \* Wash towels and bathmats weekly

## **STEP 4**

### **Kitchen**

Cockroaches are attracted to food and moisture-including crumbs, cooking grease and plain water. After dust mites, cockroaches are the second largest group of indoor allergens. It's important to remove or tightly cover all food and water, especially at night when cockroaches are more active.

#### **Food + Water + Cockroaches!**

Cockroaches are often found around the refrigerator because of food spills and dampness. These spills and moisture also grow mold. Keeping your refrigerator clean is an important part of controlling allergens. Follow the cleaning instruction in your owner's manual.

Clean food and grease from stove daily

Clean up food and spill, crumbs and liquids on counter tops and floors immediately

Empty trash daily

Clean the outside and inside of the refrigerator

Wash floors at least weekly

Keep food in closed containers

Use baits or gel products to get rid of cockroaches. Follow instructions on the product.

## **STEP 5**

### **Living Areas**

When children play and crawl on the floor, they breathe in allergens. Keep carpet, furniture and curtains as clean and dust free as possible. All home furnishings should be professionally cleaned on a regular basis. Cleaning frequency is based on the number of people in the home, if you have pets or smokers and the amount of outside dust and pollution.

When you vacuum, some of the allergens trapped in carpets and upholstery are thrown into the air. Whenever possible, have a non-allergic person do the vacuuming. Or, wear a dust mask and goggles if eye allergies are a problem.

Use a vacuum that has a HEPA (99.7% efficient) filter and/or exhaust filter; or use a special bag that holds allergens inside the bag. Vacuum at least once a week and more often if you have a pet. Empty the bag when it's half full (or throw it away if it's disposable). An upright vacuum or a canister with a powered head is best for carpet. A canister vacuum without a powered nozzle is fine for cleaning upholstery, draperies, blinds and light dusting.

At Eco Clean, we only use HEPA filtered vacuums. Call for a demonstration to learn why you should have a HEPA filtered vacuum.

Mold and germs grow in wet or damp carpeting. Carpets that have been damp or wet for more than 24 hours should be removed or professionally cleaned and restored.

Have carpets, upholstery, area rugs and mattresses professionally cleaned on a regular basis

Vacuum carpets at least once a week using a HEPA filter vacuum cleaner.

Do not allow carpet to remain damp or wet for longer than 24 hours.

Clean and dry window frames and sills on a regular basis.

Use washable rugs at doors to catch dust, pollen and soil. Wash rugs at least once a month.

Vacuum upholstered furniture on a regular basis.

Damp mop hard surface floors at least once a week.

### **Dirty carpets and fabrics hold**

**dust mites+ pollens + animal dander = allergies**

## **STEP 6**

### **Air Handling System**

Most homes and offices use a central heating, ventilation and air conditioning system (HVAC). Other homes may have central heating but use wall unit air conditioners. All heating and cooling systems should be cleaned on a regular basis.

Air duct systems can hold dust, pollen, animal dander, dust mites allergens and mold spores. If you are an allergy sufferer and have never had your air handling system cleaned, contact a professional to have this service performed.

Condensation in the air conditioning system, particularly during the summer, can collect and be a breeding ground for mold. Make sure the system drip pans are cleaned and moisture is draining properly.

Replaceable filter should be changed monthly. A filter enhancer can be sprayed on to disposable filters to improve their efficiency.

- \* We spend 90% of our time indoors
  - \* The Environmental Protection Agency research reveals the levels of some hazardous pollutants indoor is greater than outdoor air.
  - \* Prevent moisture from accumulating in your HAVC system
  - \* Use filters over heating vents and change them regularly
  - \* Change system filters monthly
  - \* Make arrangements to have your system cleaned if it's never been done in the past.

## **STEP 7**

### **Cleaning Products**

Cleaning products are tested by their manufactures to make sure they are safe to use. But accidents can happen, especially with young children. Also, people who are very sensitive to certain chemicals should be certain to read the product contents on the label before purchasing harsh cleaning agents.

#### **Here are some ways to use cleaning products safely:**

- Open windows when using cleaning products, especially if the asthmatic person is home while the cleaning is done. Ask that person to go into another room while cleaning.
- Don't leave cleaning buckets where children or pets can get into them. Young children can drown in very small amounts of liquid. Large buckets are especially dangerous.
- Never mix different cleaning products together. They can make dangerous fumes (like bleach and ammonia).
- Store cleaning products out of the reach of young children and away from food.
- Keep products in their original containers with their in place.
- Read and follow label directions, different products work in different ways and can have different use instructions.
- Keep the local poison control center number near your phone.
- Do not use products with high amounts of VOC's (volatile organic compounds).

## **STEP 8**

### **The Clutter Plan**

Want to save time and reduce allergens? Then get rid of clutter!

Having lots of stuff around does more than clutter up a room. It makes cleaning harder and gives places for dust and other allergens to collect. Follow these simple steps to reduce clutter.

### 1. Sort It Out

Start with a bedroom and take everything out of the closet, dressers, shelves, and under the bed. Put stuff in separate piles: clothes, shoes, toys, books, school supplies, sport equipment etc.

Work with your children to pick the toys and belongings that are most important, and separate those they don't use anymore.

### 2. Give It A Home

Keep similar items together so that children know where to find things. For example, keep school supplies near the desk or table where your children do homework; store videos by the VCR; toys in the play area, etc.

### 3. Cover It

Put items inside drawers, closets, covered boxes or plastic containers so dust can't collect on them. Put labels on containers to show where things belong. Have your children write or draw labels

### 4. Use It

Review the "clutter plan" with your children. Remind them that controlling clutter may help reduce asthma attacks. Have them try to put things back before getting out something else. Or, schedule 5 minutes of clean-up every night.

## STEP 9

### Water Incursion

The number one enemy of our homes is water. If you have water damage from broken pipes, leaks or rain coming into your home-it must be treated **immediately!** Steps need to be taken to dry the structure and its contents by a licensed and certified water damage contractor. We at Eco Clean are certified in Water Damage Restoration. Call us at 691-5556.

When walls, flooring, carpets or parts of your home stay wet for longer than 24 hours, mold, and bacteria will grow. This can result in the release of severe allergens into your home. Mold produces mycotoxins, which have the potential to produce toxic affects to our immune system and internal organs

With moisture present, mold can grow on sheet rock, between the walls of your home or under flooring. You may have a mold problem after a flood that is not at first visible. Do not delay in immediately contacting your insurance company whenever you have the unfortunate event of water damage.

- \* Keep the name and number of your insurance agent near your phone in the event of water damage.
- \* Contact a plumber to immediately stop the flow of water from a broken pipe.

- \* Turn off electricity at the main box before entering a room with standing water and electrical appliances.
- \* Do not put newspaper on the floor to try to absorb water.
- \* **Call Eco Clean Carpet Solutions at 691-5556 to immediately begin drying the home and its contents.**

## **STEP 10**

### **Cleaning If You Have Allergies or Asthma**

Since many allergens float in the air, they are hard to avoid. Cleaning (like dusting and vacuuming) can stir up the air and the allergens in it. Just like other particles in the air, sometimes cleaning products can “trigger” an asthma attack. But it’s still important to clean. If you don’t dust, mold and other allergens will build up, making asthma systems worse.

#### **If you have allergies or asthma, here are some important tips:**

- \* Read and follow label directions on cleaning products. The label directions give the proper amount of product to use, how to use the product and any special safety advice.
- \* If you use spray products, spray the cleaner on a cloth or sponge first, instead of the surface.
- \* Break your cleaning into small tasks. Spread it out over several days instead of doing it all at once.
- \* Clean in a “well-ventilated” area-open a door and a window or turn on an exhaust fan. Leave the room when you are done cleaning and allow the room to air out.
- \* Try using cleaning products that have no scent or are perfume free. Try different products to find the ones that work best for you.
- \* If your asthma is severe, have someone else do the cleaning. Try to leave home when the cleaning is being done. If you must do the cleaning yourself, wear a mask. Have asthmatic children leave the room when cleaning is being done. Don’t ask children with asthma to dust or vacuum. Have them do other chores like washing the dishes, taking out the trash etc.
- \* Use cleaning products that are “green” or environmentally safe. Ones without hazardous ingredients including VOC’s.