



**Weill Cornell Medicine**  
Pediatrics

**NewYork-  
Presbyterian**

# Asthma Triggers

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# Objectives

- ▶ What is a trigger?
- ▶ Common asthma triggers
  - ▶ Exercise
  - ▶ Weather change
  - ▶ Allergens
  - ▶ Irritants
  - ▶ Stress
- ▶ Managing triggers

# What is a “trigger”?

- ▶ A “trigger” is something that produces a response from your body
- ▶ In the case of **asthma**, your body sees a trigger as a threat and releases chemicals to fight off the trigger
- ▶ If not treated right away, this may lead to an *asthma attack*

# Common Asthma Triggers



# Exercise

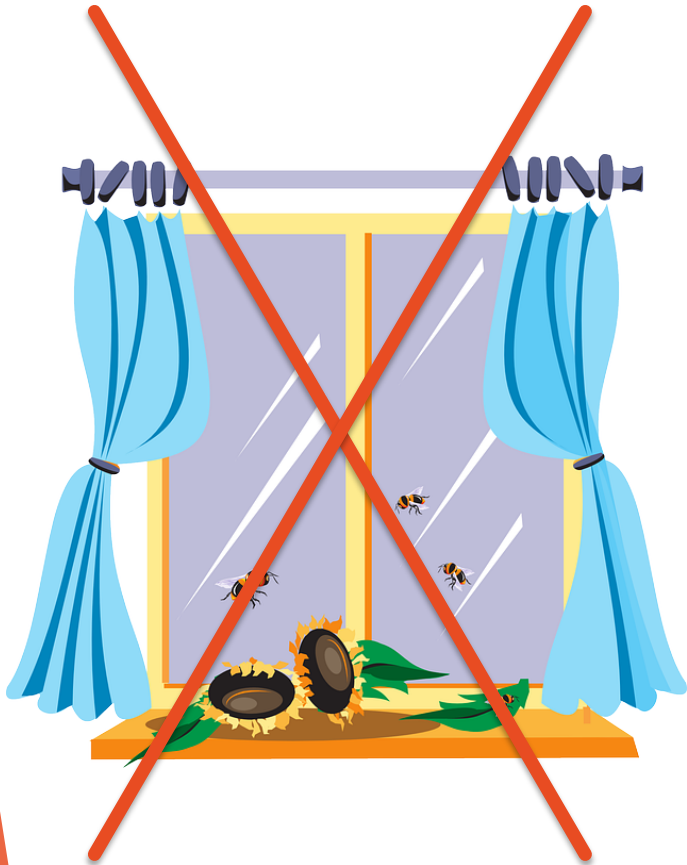
- ▶ Did you know that exercise can produce a bronchoconstriction in the airways?  
(Exercise-Induced Bronchoconstriction or EIB)
- ▶ As many as 90% of people who have asthma are triggered by exercise
- ▶ **TAKING ALBUTEROL** 15-20 minutes prior to exercise may be helpful to lower the risk of an exercise related asthma attack

# Weather Change: Cold

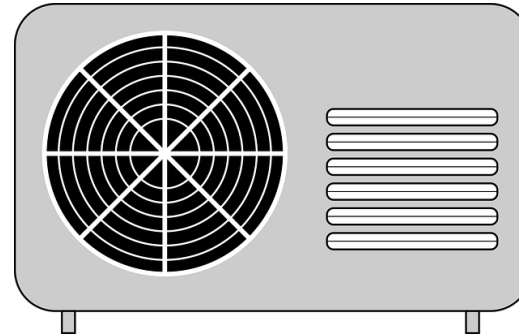
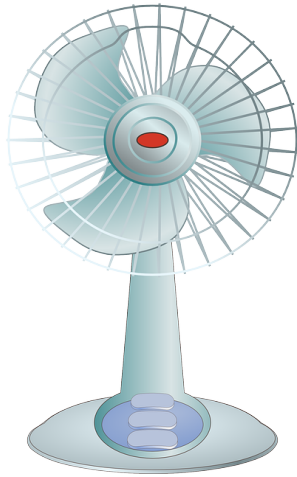
- ▶ Any change of weather can trigger your child's asthma
- ▶ In the cold:
  - ▶ It is important not to breathe in the cold air directly, this may trigger an asthma attack
  - ▶ This picture shows a round band that can be best for kids to pull up and down to shield them from the cold



# Weather Change: Heat



- ▶ If you have trouble with the heat:
  - ▶ Stay indoors on very hot days and use an air conditioner or fan (do not open windows)





# Allergens: Indoor

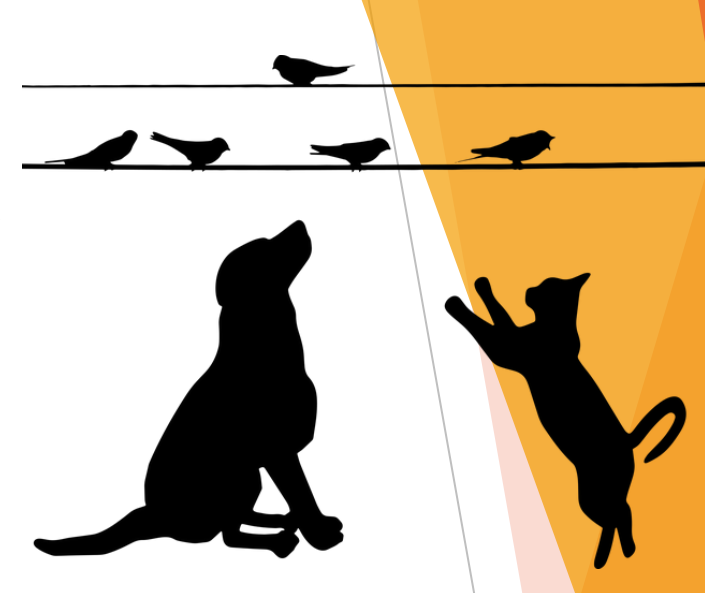
- ▶ **Pets:** should never be allowed in any room that the child is sleeping in

- ▶ **Dust Mites**

- ▶ Clean when your child is not in the room
- ▶ Remove wall to wall carpets from the home
- ▶ Cover the beds with special dust mite covers (all beds the child sleeps in)
- ▶ Always keep dust mite cover on and clean the bed sheets in hot water once a week

- ▶ \* NYC's Healthy Homes program can help with some of the following issues that make asthma worse:

- ▶ Mold and mildew
- ▶ Cockroaches, mice, and other pests



\* <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/health/health-topics/healthy-home.page>



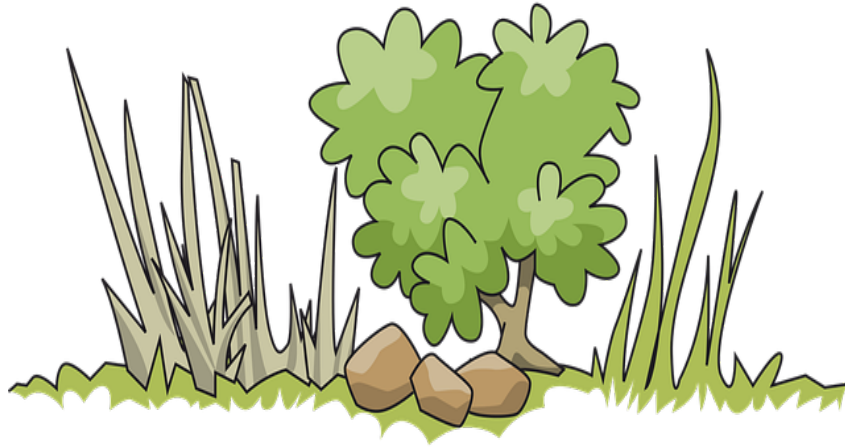
# NYC: Healthy Homes Program

- ▶ The Healthy Homes Program can answer questions about keeping homes healthy and safe \*
- ▶ For more information, call 646-632-6023  
Leave a message and they will call you back \*

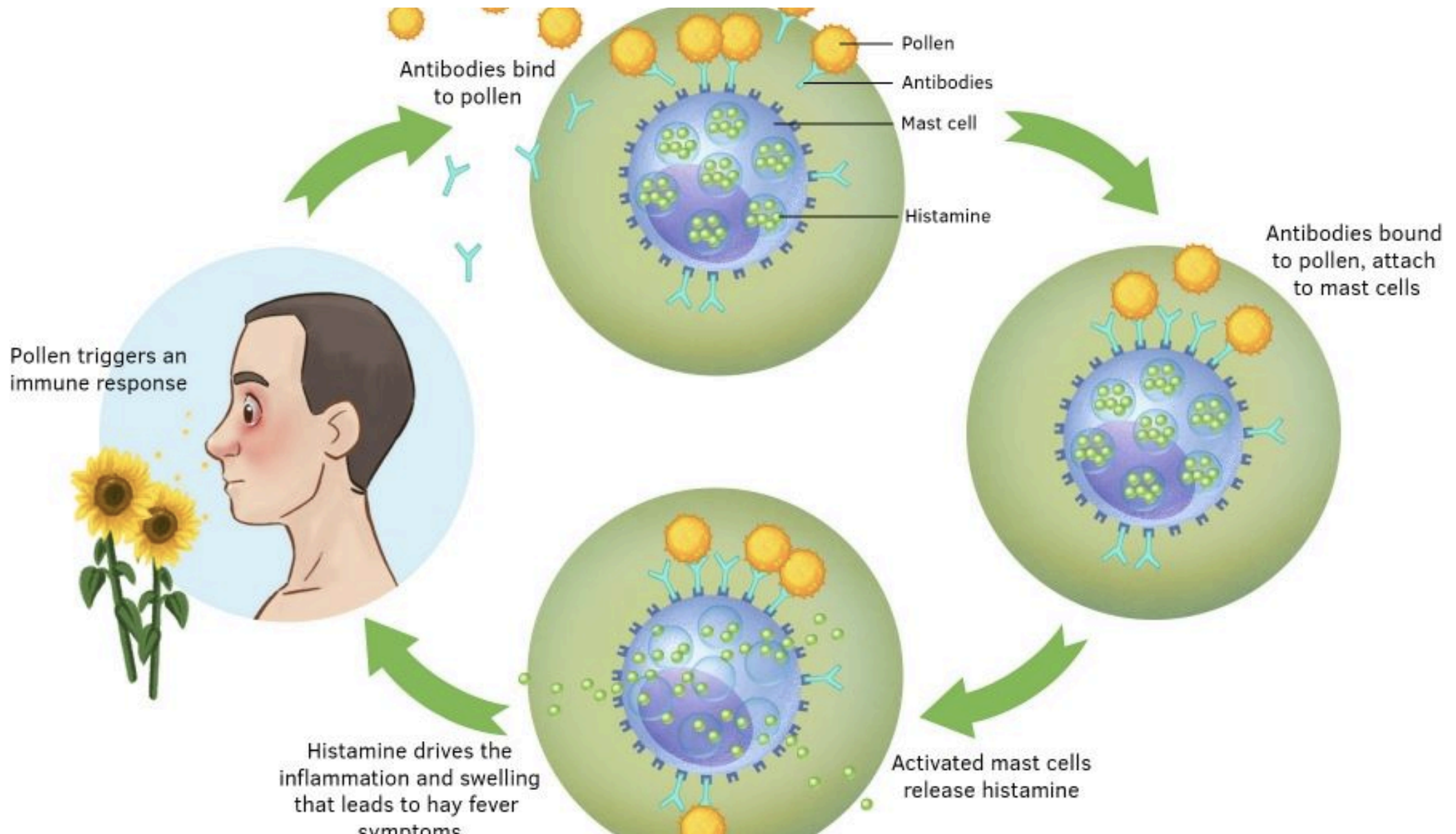
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# Allergens: Outdoor

- ▶ **Springtime:** trees and grass
- ▶ **Fall:** ragweed and mold

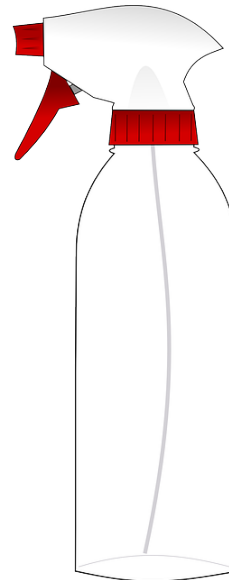
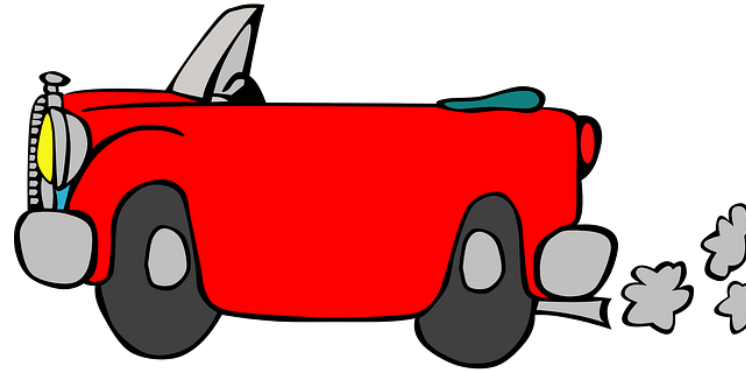


- ▶ Tips for managing outdoor allergens:
  - ▶ Pay attention as the weather begins to change - remember to check the **pollen count** in your area before you go outside
  - ▶ Wash face and hands regularly when outdoors
  - ▶ Shower when you come indoors
  - ▶ Sleep with bedroom windows closed
  - ▶ Talk to your doctor about allergy medications



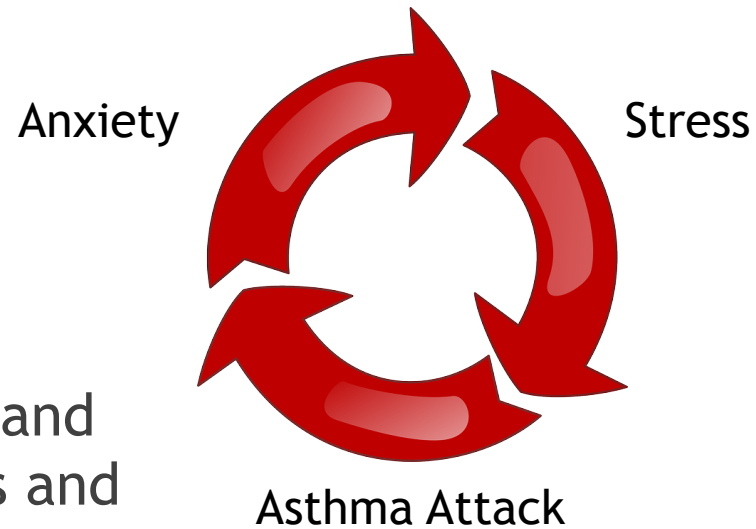
# Irritants

- ▶ Car fumes
- ▶ Cigarette smoking or vaping
- ▶ Cleaning products and other strong-smelling products



# Stress

- ▶ **Stress and anxiety** are triggers that can lead to an **asthma attack**
- ▶ During an asthma attack, wheezing and difficulty breathing can cause stress and anxiety
- ▶ It is important to talk to your child's healthcare provider about your child's mental health and help your child learn how to manage their stress and anxiety



# Managing Triggers

- ▶ **Knowing** your triggers is a very important part of good asthma control
- ▶ Speak to your health care provider if you are unsure about your triggers
- ▶ If your asthma is triggered, it is important to follow your **asthma action plan** to avoid an emergency
- ▶ Once you know your triggers, you can learn ways to avoid them!

# Contact Us

If you have questions about asthma,  
please reach out for more information:

- ▶ Email: [PedsAsthma@med.cornell.edu](mailto:PedsAsthma@med.cornell.edu)
- ▶ Phone: 212-746-4508

Visit our website for links to more resources:

<https://pediatrics.weill.cornell.edu/divisions-programs/general-academic-pediatrics/pediatric-asthma-program>