Creating a Home Environment Checklist for Tenants Living with Asthma

Sharmilee M. Nyenhuis MD
Chair, Community Engagement Committee
Chicago Asthma Consortium

Laura R. García
Policy Lead
Metropolitan Tenants Organization/Chicago Healthy Homes Coalition
To improve quality of life for those with asthma through advocacy, education and collaboration.
The Metropolitan Tenants Organization is a membership organization made up of tenants, tenant organizations, community members and groups who support the mission of MTO.

We educate, organize, and empower tenants to have a voice in the decisions that affect the affordability and availability of safe, decent & accessible housing.
State of Asthma in Chicago

Prevalence
Proportion of Chicago parents who had a child who had ever been diagnosed with asthma

2 out of 12 Chicago parents had a child with asthma

Emergency Room and/or Urgent Care Center Visits
Proportion of Chicago parents who reported visiting an emergency room or urgent care center in the last year due to their child’s asthma

24%

State of Asthma in Chicago

African American children visit the emergency room for their asthma TWICE as often as Chicago children overall.

ZIP CODES most affected:
- 60644
- 60633
- 60657
- 60624
- 60638
- 60610
- 60612
- 60621
- 60649

Asthma-related emergency department visits among Chicago youth (18 and younger) (age-adjusted rate per 10,000):
- 25.3 - 63.6
- 63.7 - 101.0
- 101.1 - 156.0
- 156.1 - 246.4
- 246.5 - 349.0

Areas with High Economic Hardship

Chicago rate: 147 per 10,000
Asthma Triggers

- Pets
- Exercise
- Pollen
- Bugs in the home
- Chemical fumes
- Cold air
- Fungus spores
- Dust
- Smoke
- Strong odors
- Pollution
- Anger
- Stress
The Need for Tools for Tenants with Asthma

Objective 1: Patient, Caregiver and Family Focused
Educate patients/families, particularly those who are tenants, on:

1) Identifying and minimizing home environmental triggers

2) How to self-remediate or to enlist their landlords in providing healthier tenants-rights based services for trigger remediation

Objective 2: Healthcare Professional Focused
Provide information and resources to healthcare providers to better understand the impact the home environment has on asthma, ways to mitigate exposures that trigger asthma and support patients and their families with the home environmental challenges they face.
THE SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF A HEALTHY HOME:

1. KEEP IT DRY
2. KEEP IT CLEAN
3. KEEP IT PEST-FREE
4. KEEP IT VENTILATED
5. KEEP IT SAFE
6. KEEP IT CONTAMINANT-FREE
7. KEEP IT MAINTAINED
Tenants with Asthma: An Environmental Checklist

The condition of your household or the building you live in can affect your health and poor conditions are a major public health issue. Substandard housing has been linked to numerous health problems including ASTHMA.

Chicago Asthma Consortium (CAC) and Metropolitan Tenants Organization (MTO) collaborated to create this checklist as a tool to identify and lessen potential household hazards (called triggers) for any tenant or family member with asthma. It is based on MTO’s Seven Principles of a Healthy Home and portions are made specific to asthma control.

It is meant to be used when looking for a new home or apartment and may be used to review with your potential or current landlord. “TIPS’ are shared not as end-all solutions, but to point out actions you and your landlord can take to better manage your living conditions and reduce exposure to environment triggers that could otherwise worsen your asthma.

https://chicagoasthma.org/tenant-checklist
Webinars

https://chicagoasthma.org/page-1075430
Ask an Expert Series
Tenants With Asthma: Assessing a Home

Moldy Carpet

Tobacco smokers in the home

https://chicagoasthma.org/page-1075430
Community Cards

Tenants with Asthma: An Environmental Checklist

For the complete checklist and detailed tips, visit our website at www.chicagoasthma.org.

If you are a tenant living in the City of Chicago and would like more information, or you are an organization that would like training in Healthy Homes, please contact MTO at their hotline, 773-292-4988, M-F 1-5pm.

Tenants with Asthma: An Environmental Checklist

THE SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF A HEALTHY HOME

1. KEEP IT DRY
   MOLD develops when moisture and dampness do NOT completely dry due to poor ventilation or standing water.

2. KEEP IT CLEAN
   HOUSEHOLD DUST and THIRD HAND SMOKE created from the by-products of cigarettes, cooking oil, candles, and incense are major triggers of asthma. While cleaning and vacuuming helps reduce these exposures, cleaning products can be irritants to airways of persons with asthma. Consider using green-cleaning products, a vacuum with a HEPA filter or choosing tile or hardwood floors instead of carpeting.

3. KEEP IT PEST FREE
   MICE, COCKROACHES, and BED BUGS leave behind feces, urine, and other chemicals that make asthma worse. They look for places to feed, drink, and nest. They leave trails of poop and urine for others to follow.

4. KEEP IT VENTILATED
   INCREASING THE FRESH AIR SUPPLY in your home improves respiratory health.

5. KEEP IT SAFE
   FALLS are the most frequent cause of residential injuries to children, followed by INJURIES from objects in the home, burns and poisonings.

6. KEEP IT CONTAMINANT FREE
   Chemical exposures to LEAD, RADON, PESTICIDES, VOLATILE ORGANIC COMPOUNDS, and ENVIRONMENTAL TOBACCO SMOKE harm your health.

7. KEEP IT MAINTAINED
   POORLY MAINTAINED homes are at risk for moisture and pest problems. Deteriorated lead-based paint in older housing is the primary cause of lead poisoning.

If you are a person with asthma, have a friend or family member with asthma, or are a healthcare provider, please visit The Chicago Asthma Consortium at www.chicagoasthma.org for a variety of support and information.
Call to Action

● Utilize collaboration of community housing partners to develop and disseminate tools

● Housing Policies in different cities

● Future mold ordinances
  ○ The Chicago Healthy Homes Coalition (CHHC) and the Chicago Healthy Homes Ordinance
Thank you!

Chicago Asthma Consortium Community Advisory Board Members
-Molly Martin, Kim Jay, Rhonda Lay, Felicia Fuller

Illinois Department of Public Health
-Nikki Woolverton

For more information on the **Chicago Healthy Homes Ordinance**, or to join in our efforts, please reach out to us: