

HGTV's Carter Oosterhouse, The Asthma And Allergy Foundation Of America, Habitat For Humanity And Merck Team Up This Summer To Help Make Your Home More Asthma-Healthy

(NAPSA)—People around the United States are enjoying warmer weather, but for those with asthma, the summer season can be problematic. Warm weather can increase production of outdoor “triggers” such as pollen and mold from flowers, trees and grasses. And while many people with asthma may see their home as a refuge, it’s important to know that a variety of indoor asthma triggers can exist throughout the home and may cause asthma symptoms and flare-ups.

Common allergens, such as dust mites, mold, pet dander and pollen, can be found on furniture, in ventilation systems and in bedding. Irritants, like tobacco and fireplace smoke, strong fumes and odors, wood dust and volatile organic compounds (VOCs), produce particles that can pollute indoor air and irritate the airways in the lungs. These asthma triggers can be either right out in the open or hiding in unexpected places, but there are ways to reduce exposure to some asthma triggers and take steps to create a more asthma-healthy home.

To highlight the importance of maintaining an asthma-healthy home throughout the year, Carter Oosterhouse, the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America (AAFA), Habitat for Humanity and Merck have teamed up on the national asthma education program, Build Smart, Breathe Easier.

“Many people may not realize the impact their home might have on their health, especially those living with asthma,” said HGTV personality and carpenter Carter Oosterhouse. “There are simple



ways to try to make your home more asthma-healthy, including using materials, such as hard-surface floors or nontoxic paint, that are easy to clean and less likely to contain irritants.”

Asthma is a chronic inflammatory disease of the airways. Common symptoms include shortness of breath, coughing, wheezing and chest tightness.

Asthmatic airways can be especially sensitive to allergens or irritants that may be found on surfaces and materials in the home, and symptoms may result from this exposure. While patients often consider these symptoms a normal part of their disease, worsening asthma symptoms may be a sign that asthma is not well controlled.

“While there is no cure for asthma, it is important for people with the disease to work with their health care provider to determine an appropriate asthma action plan to meet their individual needs,” said Dr. Reynold Panettieri, asthma researcher and professor of medicine at the University of Pennsylvania. “I believe that reducing exposure to asthma triggers in the home should be a part of every asthma action plan.”

With a better understanding of what might trigger their symptoms and flare-ups, people with asthma can incorporate materials

and techniques to help build, furnish and maintain a more asthma-healthy home. They can also take certain precautions when cleaning, in an effort to make their houses more asthma-healthy.

For more information about Build Smart, Breathe Easier, including tips for maintaining an asthma-healthy home, visit www.BuildSmartBreatheEasier.com.

Build Smart, Breathe Easier partners share tips to help you maintain an asthma-healthy home:

- Wash pillows frequently and consider purchasing dust mite resistant mattress and pillow encasements to help prevent dust mites from entering bedding materials.

- Choose cleaning products with minimal or no chemical scents, odors or VOCs.

- Install vinyl or wood blinds and shades instead of heavy drapes and curtains because large amounts of fabric can easily trap allergens like dust and are more difficult to clean.

- Ensure windows and doors are properly sealed to prevent condensation from collecting, which can cause mold and mildew growth.

- Choose hard surface flooring, such as wood, linoleum or vinyl. Carpeting can harbor dust mites and other allergens, which can trigger asthma symptoms in some people.

Visit www.BuildSmartBreatheEasier.com for more tips and information.
