

Children's Health Update

A Simple Way To Combat Childhood Asthma

(NAPSA)—Although instances of asthma have steadily increased in the United States, there are steps parents can take to protect their little ones.

For some children around the country, the problem may be coming home on the backs, legs and mouths of a certain, unwelcome six-legged bug—the cockroach.

It is estimated that more than 5 million children have asthma. Normally for those with asthma, attack triggers can include cold air, exercise or allergens such as pollen and animal dander. But for asthmatic children, cockroaches may be among the biggest triggers in the home.

According to the American Academy of Allergy Asthma and Immunology, cockroaches are not just an unwelcome visitor in the home—a protein they produce is a primary trigger of asthma symptoms, especially for children living in densely populated, urban neighborhoods.

Studies show that up to 98 percent of urban homes have cockroaches, according to the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America. Symptoms of the cockroach allergen can include mildly itchy skin, a scratchy throat or irritated eyes and nose. In addition, roaches can hide anywhere in the home, according to pest control experts at Combat®, a brand that markets roach and ant baits and gels.

Children exposed and sensitized to the cockroach allergen have significantly more asthma symptoms, more caretaker-interrupted sleep, and more school days missed than children who are not exposed to cockroaches, according to the *Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology*.



While cockroaches can be found in even the cleanest homes, there are a few good ways to cut down on the chance of a cockroach infestation in your home:

- Keep food and garbage wrapped up and out of the way.
- Don't leave out dirty dishes, food or crumbs.
- Wash and clean kitchen floors and countertops often—at least once a week.
- Make sure to seal any porous entryways inside, such as vents and drains.
- Fix any water leaks and clean up standing water.

Sometimes, preventative measures aren't enough. That's when you may want to consider using roach baits and gels. Brands like Combat offer a number of different products that can be used to keep your home cockroach-free and are available at most mass retailers.

Compared to sprays, which are only temporary deterrents, cockroach baits and gels last longer, kill the nest, are cleaner to handle, and the contained pesticide prevents exposure to family and pets.

To learn more about cockroaches and how to keep your home free of them, visit www.combatbugs.com.