



# The Healthy Home

## Clean Your Air: Six Ways To Manage Allergens

(NAPS)—As the warmer seasons unfold, a host of allergens and irritants become more prevalent, potentially disrupting your daily life and health—especially if you have asthma and allergies. According to the Allergy and Asthma Foundation of America (AAFA), millions of people are affected by allergies, and understanding how to control your environment can significantly improve your quality of life during this beautiful but challenging season. Here are effective strategies and types of products that can help reduce allergens and irritants in your home:

### 1. Prioritize Indoor Air Quality

**Air Purifiers**—Invest in a good air purifier. Devices with HEPA filters are especially effective at trapping allergens such as pollen, pet dander, and dust mites. To maximize their effectiveness, put air purifiers in commonly used areas such as bedrooms and living rooms.

**Humidity Control**—Maintain indoor humidity levels between 30% and 50%. Humidifiers can add moisture to dry air, while dehumidifiers can help control mold growth and dust mites by reducing excess moisture. Both tools are essential in creating a balanced indoor environment.

### 2. Keep It Clean

**Regular Cleaning**—Weekly cleaning can significantly reduce the presence of allergens. Use a vacuum cleaner with a HEPA filter to capture the fine particles that traditional vacuums may recirculate into the air. Remember to wear a dust mask while cleaning to avoid inhaling allergens.

**Bedding and Upholstery**—Encase mattresses and pillows in dust mite-proof covers. Wash bedding weekly in hot water to kill dust mites and remove allergens. Additionally, consider washing or replacing curtains and deep cleaning upholstery where allergens can linger.

### 3. Filter and Ventilate

**Replace HVAC Filters**—Regularly replace the filters in your heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems. Opt for filters with a high MERV (Minimum Efficiency Reporting Value) rating that can capture smaller particles, thus improving indoor air quality. Check with your manufacturer to ensure you're using the right MERV rating for your system. Using a filter with too high a rating for your system can cause more harm than good, taxing your system and shortening its lifespan.

**Enhance Ventilation**—Improve your home's ventilation by opening



**Regular cleaning can help protect your home from dust, dander, pollen, mold and other allergen.**

windows when the pollen count is low or using exhaust fans in the kitchen and bathrooms to reduce moisture and cooking fumes, which can exacerbate asthma symptoms.

**Air Duct Cleaning**—Consider having your air ducts cleaned by a NAD-CA-certified professional. Over time, dust, mold, and other allergens can accumulate in your duct system, affecting the overall air quality and efficiency of your HVAC system. Cleaning your air ducts can help ensure that these irritants are removed, providing cleaner, fresher airflow throughout your home.

### 4. Create a Pollen-Free Zone

Keep windows and doors closed during high pollen days. Use air conditioning in your home and car to keep pollen out. Remove shoes at the door and shower after being outdoors to wash pollen off your skin and hair.

### 5. Control Pet Dander

If you have pets, groom them regularly to reduce the dander they shed. Also, establish pet-free zones, especially in bedrooms, to minimize allergy exposure while sleeping.

### 6. Consider Indoor Plants

Some plants can help improve indoor air quality. However, it's important to choose wisely, as some plants can also be sources of mold or pollen. Spider plants and ferns are good options for improving air without increasing allergens.

By integrating these strategies and using effective products, you can significantly reduce the impact of allergens and irritants during the allergy and asthma season. Living with allergies and asthma can be challenging, but with these tips from BreathingClean.com, you can enjoy the season without the sneeze.