



## Fact Sheet: Asthma and the School Environment

Asthma is the leading cause of school absenteeism, 13 million missed school days per year.

### What is Asthma?

Asthma is chronic disease of the lung caused by inflammation of the airways. When the airways become inflamed, they tighten and it becomes difficult for air to pass through. This leads to wheezing, coughing and chest tightness.

### What is the prevalence of Asthma?

In 2009, 7.1 million children were reported to have asthma in the U.S.

### What are some environmental triggers of asthma found in schools?

- Cockroaches
- Mice
- Mold
- Dander from animals in the classroom
- Dust mites
- Secondhand smoke
- Pesticides
- Cleaning agents

### What are some environmental triggers found in the outdoor environment?

- Ozone

- Particle pollution (diesel exhaust)

### How can I reduce my students' exposure to environmental triggers?

- Control Cockroach and pest allergens by not leaving food, water or garbage out.
- Control exposure to harmful cleaning agents by using less toxic cleaning products .
- Control dust mites by frequent dusting; and wash often the items that may attract dust.
- Implement a no-idling policy of vehicles near the school to reduce exposure to particle pollution
- Implement a tobacco free environment
- School policy can help reduce kids exposure to second hand smoke

### How can I help my students manage their asthma?

- Develop an Asthma Management Plan for each student with asthma
- Have a school policy that sup-

ports the asthma management plans; students should be able to access their inhalers and other medications

- Educate teachers and staff about the emergency procedure to use when child is having an asthma attack.

### Citations

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