

BENEFITS OF MAINTAINING A HEALTHY RENTAL UNIT

INCREASE DURABILITY-

Checks for health hazards may alert the landlord and tenant to early signs of increased wear and tear on heating and cooling systems and other hidden structural damage.

REDUCE COST-

Replacing or fixing systems when the problems are smaller can save money. A small water leak can be quickly repaired, but if unchecked – may lead to mold, health and cost issues.

IMPROVE HEALTH-

Home conditions can both cause and trigger asthma and allergies. Unhealthy tenants may miss work and rent payments.

REDUCE LIABILITY-

Addressing potential health hazards can reduce the likelihood of costly lawsuits and code violations.

MAINTAIN PROPERTY VALUE AND APPEAL-

Healthier living conditions can attract more tenants.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:
<http://www.cdc.gov/asthma/default.htm>
- Environmental Protection Agency:
<http://www.epa.gov/iaq/asthma.html>
- National Center for Healthy Living:
<http://www.centerforhealthyhousing.org/>
- Wisconsin Department of Health Services:
<http://dhs.wisconsin.gov/eh/Asthma/index.htm>
- Children's Health Alliance of Wisconsin:
<http://www.chawisconsin.org/asthma.htm>

References

Asthma Regional Council. Property Maintenance for a Healthy Home, 2006.

Department of Health Services. Burden of Asthma in Wisconsin, 2007.

Environmental Health Watch website
www.ehw.org/Asthma/ASTH_Indoor_Control_Triggers.htm
Accessed, October 2007.

National Center for Healthy Homes. Essentials for Healthy Homes Practitioners Course, 2007.

United States Department of Housing and Urban Development. Help Your self to a Healthy Home, 2006.

Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection website
<http://datcp.state.wi.us/cp/consumerinfo/cp/top-complaints/tenants.jsp>
Accessed, October 2007.

Developed by the
Wisconsin Department of Health Services
Division of Public Health
Bureau of Environmental and Occupational Health
P-45108 (11/08)

CONTROLLING ASTHMA IN THE HOME:

A GUIDE FOR LANDLORDS AND TENANTS



WISCONSIN
ASTHMA
COALITION
★Children's Health
Alliance of Wisconsin

ASTHMA AT A GLANCE

WHAT IS ASTHMA?

A chronic lung disease that causes breathing problems:

- Airways get narrow
- Muscles around airways tighten
- Thick, yellow mucous is produced

Symptoms:

- Wheezing
- Shortness of breath
- Chest tightness
- Coughing

Asthma cannot be cured, but it can be controlled by proper use of medicines and avoiding triggers.

WHAT ARE ASTHMA TRIGGERS?

- Dust mites
- Cockroaches
- Mold
- Tobacco smoke
- Pets
- Air Pollution

WISCONSIN STATISTICS:

About 13% of children and adults have been diagnosed with asthma.

Overall rate of asthma emergency department visits in 2000 was 41 per 10,000 people.

Hospitalization rate in 2005 was 10 per 10,000 people.

These numbers can be reduced by maintaining healthier living conditions within one's home and reducing contact with asthma triggers.

HOW TO CONTROL ASTHMA TRIGGERS.....

IN THE HOME

AVOID POLLUTANTS

WHY?.....Pollutants such as paints, air fresheners, cleaners and hairspray are asthma triggers

- Keep containers sealed.
- Remove unwanted products from the home.
- Store away from ventilation sources.

KEEP IT CLEAN

WHY?.....Dust mites feed on dust and are asthma triggers

- Keep clutter down.
- Clean carpets twice a year and vacuum frequently.
- If possible, avoid carpeting and have hard floors instead.
- Dust with a damp cloth.
- Use plastic mattress and pillow cases.
- Wash bedding in hot water every week.

KEEP IT DRY

WHY?.....Mold spores are asthma triggers

- Check for water stains and wet spots under windows, near doors and appliances, and around toilets, tubs and showers.
- Fix leaky plumbing or other sources of water.

KEEP IT PEST-FREE

WHY?.....Droppings or body parts of cockroaches and rodents are asthma triggers

- Store food in airtight containers.
- Clean-up crumbs and spills right away.
- Empty garbage often.
- Wash dishes right after eating.
- Don't leave food or water out overnight.
- Seal cracks or openings.
- If extermination is needed, use Integrated Pest Management approaches for a nontoxic alternative to traditional techniques.

KEEP IT SMOKE-FREE

WHY?.....Tobacco smoke is an asthma trigger

Smoke-free rental units will:

- Improve the health of all tenants, particularly those with asthma.
- Reduce the risk of fire.
- Lower maintenance costs such as cleaning drapes and carpets and repainting.

KEEP IT VENTILATED

WHY?.....Pollutants such as mold and tobacco smoke are asthma triggers and are found at higher levels indoors

- Check that the air conditioning and heat work properly.
- Change heating and air conditioning filters every six months.
- Make sure all windows open easily.
- Check that bath and kitchen fans ventilate outside.
- Run kitchen and bathroom exhaust fans at least twenty minutes when showering, cooking or using the dishwasher.

LEGAL RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

Landlord responsibilities:

- Make repairs necessary to comply with local housing codes and keep the premises safe.
- Keep in a reasonable state of repair portions of the premises which are maintained by the landlord.

Tenant responsibilities:

- Make routine minor repairs.
- Comply with maintenance and sanitation requirements imposed by local housing codes.