

Tips to reduce asthma attacks this summer

Approximately 60% of asthma attacks are caused by environmental allergens and irritants such as smoke, pollen and animal dander. Below are tips to help reduce attacks caused by environmental allergens and irritants this summer:

- Watch for changing weather conditions such as ozone alerts, changes in temperature, humidity, barometric pressure or strong winds that can aggravate asthma. August in the St. Louis metropolitan area is an especially difficult month for many asthmatics who are affected by poor air quality. Ozone and particulates at ground level soar with the temperature inversions common during this month
- Minimize strenuous physical activity outdoors on days when temperatures are excessively high. Sports that require short bursts of energy, such as baseball, football, wrestling, golfing, gymnastics, swimming, walking or hiking, are less likely to trigger asthma. People with exercise-induced asthma (EIA) should not stop exercising. Many asthmatics have found that with proper training and medical treatment, they are able to reduce the symptoms of EIA.
- Take medications as prescribed by your allergist in the recommended dosage. Do not take more medication to ease severe symptoms without consulting with your physician first.
- Use an air conditioner in both your home and car to keep air clean, cool and dry.
- Sit far away from smoke created by campfires or someone who is smoking.
- Do not stand directly behind cars that are running; exhaust fumes could trigger an asthma attack.
- Air out tents/tree houses or other confined places where mold, a common allergen, could be found.
- Shower and wash your hair every night before going to bed to remove allergens from your hair and avoid getting them on your pillow.
- Leave tennis shoes outside before you come in the house. You'll avoid tracking pollen indoors.

Asthma is a chronic disease, and requires continuous management and appropriate treatment. We can work together on these goals to ensure that your asthma is well-managed. Having asthma should not stop you from participating in normal activities. As always, please call or come in to our office to discuss this or other topics regarding your asthma and allergy relief.