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A Newsletter for AvMed Members

YOUR HEALTHIEST LIFE WITH ASTHMA



Hidden holiday asthma triggers

You deserve to enjoy every moment of your holidays. Staying ahead of these sneaky triggers can help you enjoy the season to the fullest.

Hidden trigger #1
Seasonal scents

Certain fragrances may irritate your airways. If scents tend to trigger your symptoms, try creating a festive atmosphere with lights and other odor-free décor instead.

Hidden trigger #2
Large gatherings

The holiday season often means spending more time indoors, where respiratory viruses may spread more easily. To protect yourself, stay up to date on recommended vaccines, including your annual flu shot, and wash your hands frequently.

Hidden trigger #3
Dusty decorations

Along with cherished ornaments and festive décor can come some less-welcome guests: dust and mold. Before decorating, clean stored items and consider wearing a mask while unpacking if dust or mold tends to bother you.

Hidden trigger #4
Holiday travel

Changes in temperature and humidity can trigger symptoms. Before traveling, review your Asthma Action Plan and pack enough medication for your entire trip, plus a few extra days. Keep your medication in your carry-on bag. If winter travel has worsened your symptoms before, ask your physician about other ways to prepare.



Ask the pediatrician

Q What should I consider when traveling with my child who has asthma?

A From packing medications to avoiding common triggers, Melanie Carver, chief mission officer at the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America, shares how to help your child stay healthy and safe while traveling.

How can families prepare? Before leaving home, make sure your child's Asthma Action Plan is up to date. Pack all of your child's asthma medications, including their quick-relief inhaler in easy-access bags. Be sure to bring spacers, nebulizers, or other asthma equipment your child uses regularly. Carver also recommends including N95 masks and allergy medications.

How can a change in climate affect symptoms? Dry air and temperature changes can irritate the airways. Staying hydrated and adding moisture through showers, baths, or a face covering may help.

Children may also encounter new allergens and irritants. Check **AirNow.gov** for current air-quality conditions and avoid outdoor activities when the Air Quality Index (AQI) is above 100.

How can parents manage a flare up? Treat symptoms according to your child's Asthma Action Plan. Seek immediate medical care if symptoms worsen quickly, quick-relief medications aren't helping, or your child has severe shortness of breath, worsening chest pain, or difficulty walking or talking because of breathing problems.

To reach a Case Manager
Simply call 1-833-609-0735, email DM@AvMed.org or scan this QR code.

Make the most of your daily walk



Put a little pep in your step with these expert-approved tips for turning an ordinary walk into a feel-good fitness routine.

You don't need a gym membership or fancy equipment to get moving. In fact, walking is one of the easiest ways to work toward the recommended 150 minutes of weekly exercise.

"If you can't make it around the block just yet, walking can be a way of building up strength and fitness," says Michele Stanten, a fitness consultant at Harvard Health Publishing and author of *Walk Off Weight*.

Ready to get moving? Talk with your physician first, then try these pro tips from Stanten.

Start small

The most important thing is to get into a habit and be consistent, Stanten explains. Start with 5 to 10 minutes a day, at a time you can regularly commit to.

Each week, add another five minutes, until you reach 30 minutes.

Focus on good form

Proper form is the secret to transforming an ordinary walk into a workout, Stanten says. Here's what that looks like:

- **Walk tall.** Your shoulders should line up under your ears.
- **Draw your belly muscles up and in.** It helps support your spine as you walk.
- **Step heel-ball-toe.** This pattern helps you stay stable while in motion.
- **Look up.** You want to look about 10 to 15 feet in front of you as you move. This helps you identify and avoid any trip hazards.

Leave the weights at home

Stanten does not believe hand weights are the best way to raise the difficulty of your routine.

Instead, further challenge yourself by speeding up or walking for longer. You'll burn more calories going faster than you will by holding weights, Stanten says.

All in all, walking is a great way to start—and maintain—a fitness routine. If you're not sure where to begin, a good first step is talking with your physician or RN Case Manager.

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