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*Listening, learning,
and living together:
it's the science of life.*

Indoor Air Quality and Asthma¹

Mary Harrison and Donna Davis²

Indoor air quality can have significant impact on a family's health, especially if a family member has asthma. Researchers say more than half of the U.S. population with asthma suffers from the allergic form of the disease. In these cases, the asthma is aggravated by exposure to allergens, like pollen, dust mites, and mold. And if you live in Florida, home of 10 of the 100 most challenging cities for people with asthma, air quality (indoors or out) provides an even greater problem (Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America, 2005).

However, there are steps you can take to reduce the triggers that cause the onset of an asthma attack. For example, many asthma sufferers are very sensitive to dust mites. Dust mites are found in bedding, pillows, stuffed toys, overstuffed furniture and carpeting. Enclose the mattress in a plastic cover and seal. Wash the sheets and pillow cases once a week or more often, and avoid feather pillows. Don't put stuffed toys on the bed, and wash toys often or put them in a freezer for 48 hours often to kill mites. Don't allow an asthmatic child to lie on a carpeted floor or overstuffed furniture, where it's easy to inhale dust mites. (Dust mites are very small and can be seen only with magnification.) Consider a hard-surface floor too.

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2. Mary Harrison, professor, and Donna Davis, Senior Producer, Family Album Radio, Department of Family, Youth and Community Sciences, Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611. Reviewed by Suzanna Smith, associate professor, Department of Family, Youth and Community Sciences, University of Florida, and Executive Producer, Family Album Radio.

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Keeping up with dust and dust mites is no easy task, but will dramatically improve the quality of life of those who suffer from asthma.

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To listen to the radio broadcast:

http://www.radiosource.net/radio_stories/iaqa.mp3

http://www.radiosource.net/radio_stories/iaqa.wav

References

Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America. (2005). *Do you live in an asthma capital?* Retrieved June 8, 2007, from <http://www.aafa.org/display.cfm?id=7&sub=92&cont=461>.