

# SAFE CLEANING FOR PEOPLE WITH ASTHMA

Cleaning with non-toxic cleaners is a great way to both clean your home and manage asthma. Here are some suggestions for cleaning and decreasing asthma triggers. These recipes are easy, inexpensive, and non-polluting.

## MOLD & MILDEW CLEANER

**Baking soda, borax, or white vinegar**

Any of these can be used to scrub mold-infected areas. Dry areas when finished.

**Lemon juice and salt or white vinegar and salt**

Mix a paste of lemon juice and salt or white vinegar and salt to scrub mold infected areas. Dry areas when finished.

### TIPS

When showering or bathing, turn on the bathroom fan and allow it to run for 15 minutes or longer. If the bathroom does not have a fan, open a window for 15 minutes or longer.

Replace or wash moldy shower curtains.

Fix leaky plumbing and remove other unwanted sources of water.



## WINDOW & MIRROR CLEANER

**Vinegar  
Water  
Liquid laundry detergent**

Pour ¼ cup vinegar into a 16-ounce spray bottle and fill to the top with water. To prevent streaking, add 3 to 4 drops of detergent into the spray bottle. Mix well, spray on the surface, and scrub with a cloth diaper, lint-free rag, or sheet of newspaper.

## STAIN REMOVER

**Borax  
Water**

Mix ¼ cup of borax with 2 cups of water. Use a sponge or cloth to dab the solution on the stain. Let it dry. Use another clean cloth moistened with water to scrub the stained area.

## DUSTING & POLISHING

**Olive oil or almond oil**

Use a soft fabric with a few drops of oil for polishing surfaces.

### TIPS

Organize clothes and toys in clear plastic trash bags or bins.

Wash stuffed animals in hot water and dry them on a high heat setting. Sealing toys in a plastic bag and placing them in the freezer overnight or for at least 5 hours also kills dust mites.

Wash all bedding in hot water and dry it on a high setting every few weeks.

Vacuum and dust with a damp cloth at least once a week, preferably with a HEPA vacuum.

Take off shoes before entering the house to cut down on contaminants that can be spread through the house.



## PEST CONTROL

**1 quart water  
1 crushed garlic clove  
1 minced onion  
1 tablespoon ground cayenne pepper  
1 tablespoon liquid laundry detergent**



Mix the water and food ingredients. Let stand for 1 hour, strain, and add the liquid soap. Pour mixture into spray bottle and spray it around the house for pest control.

### TIPS

Avoid saving boxes, paper bags, or newspapers in piles.

Do not leave open food or dirty dishes lying around the kitchen.

Keep counters free of crumbs and spills.

Keep garbage containers closed.

Rinse recyclables before putting them in a bin.

Avoid using pesticides. Use traps or baits instead.

## OVEN CLEANER

**Baking soda  
Water  
Scouring pad**

Mix 1 cup of baking soda with enough water to make a paste. Apply to interior oven surfaces and let stand for at least 30–45 minutes. Use a scouring pad to scrub soiled areas of the oven and use a harder object, such as a bread knife, for larger food deposits.

Do not use this cleaner on self-cleaning ovens.

## FRESH AIR

Throw out harsh chemical cleaners and scented household cleaners.

Use mild, unscented detergents for clothes and avoid scented fabric softeners.

Stop using air fresheners and deodorizers.

Do not smoke cigarettes in the home.

## TUB, TOILET & SINK CLEANER

**Baking soda  
Liquid castile soap**

Sprinkle baking soda onto porcelain surfaces. Squeeze a couple of drops of soap onto the surfaces. Scrub the porcelain surfaces with a damp rag. Rinse well to avoid leaving a hazy film.

## DRAIN CLEANER

**Baking soda  
Vinegar  
Boiling water**

Pour ½ cup of baking soda down the drain first, followed by ½ cup of vinegar. Let the drain bubble for 3 to 5 minutes. Finally, pour about a quart of boiling water down the drain. Repeat the process if the drain is still clogged.

A drain snake or a plunger can be used as a non-chemical method to unclog a drain.



For additional information, call the **HEALTH Information Line** at 401-222-5960 / RI Relay 711 or visit [www.health.ri.gov/asthma](http://www.health.ri.gov/asthma)

RECIPES PROVIDED BY THE AMERICAN LUNG ASSOCIATION IN WASHINGTON AND THE BOSTON PUBLIC HEALTH COMMISSION