



# ASTHMA

*Don't let it leave  
you breathless*



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Asthma is a chronic inflammatory disease that obstructs the airways, making it difficult to breathe. Asthma may be worsened by exposure to:

- Cockroaches
- Mice
- Cigarettes
- Dust mites
- Outdoor air pollution
- Car exhaust
- Freezing temperatures
- Mold
- High humidity
- Pests

## Symptoms of Asthma

- Trouble breathing
- Coughing
- Chest tightness
- Wheezing

## At risk

Children with a family history of asthma and allergies are at higher risk. According to the NYC Department of Health, asthma rates in Hell's Kitchen and Chelsea from 2004 - 2007 are the third highest at any neighborhood in Manhattan. During 2007-2008, 1,143 residents in Hell's Kitchen, Chelsea, and the Upper West Side were hospitalized for asthma.

Nationwide, asthma affects 7.8 % of the population. Each year, 7 million children are hospitalized because of complications from asthma. The disease is the most common cause of missed work and school as well as limitation of activity.

## What to do

Live a healthy life and control your asthma by identifying and avoiding situations that trigger your airway inflammation. Follow the advice of your doctor and take precautions at home:

- ✓ Eradicate cockroaches and mice from your apartment. Keep water and food sources sealed so that cockroaches/mice cannot thrive. Vacuum or sweep areas that might attract cockroaches/mice.
- ✓ Schedule and attend regular doctor's visits.

- ✓ Use mattress and pillowcase covers to create a barrier between dust mites and yourself.

- ✓ Fix water leaks, which allow mold to grow behind walls and under floors.

- ✓ Never smoke around a person with asthma, whether at home or in a car.

- ✓ Pay attention to air quality forecasts and plan your activities for when air pollution levels are low.

- ✓ Keep pets out of the bedroom.

- ✓ Drive less. Walk, bike or use public transportation to cut down on air pollution. Tell drivers that it is illegal to leave engines running while parked for more than 3-minutes citywide, and just 1-minute in a school zone.

## Help center

Housing Conservation Coordinators, a community based-organization with more than 38 years of experience preserving affordable housing in Hell's Kitchen, can help you with your complaint to obtain necessary repairs. Call 212.541.5996 or visit us at 777 Tenth Avenue, New York, 10019. For more information: [www.hcc-nyc.org](http://www.hcc-nyc.org)

This brochure was adapted from information provided by the U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention.

