



**SENSITIVE  
CHOICE**

# Live better with asthma and allergies

Discover the Sensitive Choice  
blue butterfly and your  
information hub for managing  
asthma and allergies

## ABOUT US

# Sensitive Choice helps people live better with asthma and allergies.

The National Asthma Council Australia created the program to identify products and services that are asthma and allergy aware, through the trusted blue butterfly.

Products and services that carry this symbol have been reviewed and approved by an expert panel that determines their potential benefit to people with asthma or allergies.

The Sensitive Choice website is an information hub, packed with tips and resources to help with asthma and allergy management.

Look out for the blue butterfly on hundreds of products and services.



## Our approval process

Before a product or service is approved by Sensitive Choice it is rigorously reviewed by our independent expert panel, who considers whether the product is suitable to carry the blue butterfly.

The panel reviews evidence to determine that a product or service is not harmful and demonstrates a potential benefit for people with asthma or allergies, before making a recommendation.

## WHAT IS ASTHMA?

Asthma is a condition that affects the airways – the small tubes that carry air to the lungs. It affects about 2.7 million people in Australia and about 600,000 people in New Zealand.

From time to time, people with asthma find it harder to breathe, because their airways become narrower. At other times, their breathing is normal.

Common symptoms include wheezing, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath. These symptoms can be triggered by different things for different people.

There is no cure for asthma, but it can usually be well controlled. Good asthma management and education can help people with asthma lead active, healthy lives.

## For good asthma control, you need:

- 1 Medicines – taken the right way, at the right time
- 2 Regular medical visits for check-ups and to learn more about living with asthma
- 3 An action plan, so you know what to do when symptoms happen



## WHAT ARE ALLERGIES?

Allergies occur when a person's immune system reacts to substances that are harmless to most people. These substances are known as allergens.

Examples of allergens include house dust mites, pollen, mould and pet dander.

Contact with one of these substances can cause a person with allergies to develop a reaction that leads to redness and swelling. This can affect the nose and/ or eyes, skin, and lungs.

About 80 per cent of people with asthma have allergies like hay fever. Allergies may run in families. The genetic or inherited tendency to develop allergic diseases is known as atopy.



## What you can do:

- 1 Ask your doctor or pharmacist for information and advice about asthma and allergy
- 2 Your doctor can help you identify possible allergic triggers and order or arrange for allergy testing
- 3 The best way to manage allergies is to avoid the allergens, but this can be a challenge

## KNOW YOUR TRIGGERS

# Everyone has different asthma or allergy triggers.

If you think you might have an allergy, speak with your doctor to work out what's causing the reaction and how you can manage it.

Most people are allergic to more than one trigger and sometimes the response is different. For example, you might get itchy eyes around cats but a runny nose during pollen season.

Once you know what to focus on, you might be able to avoid or reduce your exposure to some triggers.

It's not always possible to avoid triggers entirely but reducing your exposure could make symptoms easier to manage.

Allergen avoidance strategies should be used in combination with your recommended medicines and do not replace your doctor's advice.



## Common household triggers include:



DUST MITES



MOULD



POLLEN



PETS



SMOKE



VOLATILE ORGANIC  
COMPOUNDS (VOCs)

Visit [sensitivechoice.com](https://sensitivechoice.com) for information and tips to help manage triggers.



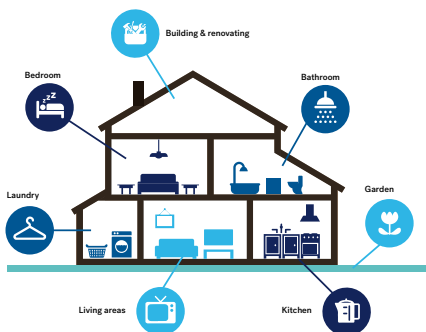
## CREATING A HEALTHY HOME

There are steps you can take around the home to create a healthier environment to help you live better with asthma and allergies.

For example, did you know high indoor humidity levels can create ideal conditions for mould and dust mites to thrive?

From improving air circulation, to choosing products that avoid certain chemicals, the strategies to consider depend on your household's triggers and circumstances.

Visit [sensitivechoice.com](https://sensitivechoice.com) for information and tips to help manage asthma and allergy triggers.



These include simple tips that can make a difference, such as:

- If **dust mites** are an issue, washing bedding regularly in water hotter than 55 degrees can help
- Use extractor fans in bathrooms, kitchens and laundries to aid natural ventilation and reduce the likelihood of **mould** growth
- If someone has an allergy to the household **pet**, vacuum carpets, curtains and upholstery regularly using a vacuum with a motorised brush and HEPA filter
- Avoid hanging laundry outside to dry on high **pollen** count days if it's a trigger

## **Disclaimer**

Although all care has been taken, this brochure is only a general guide; it is not a substitute for individual medical advice/treatment. Sensitive Choice expressly disclaims all responsibility (including negligence) for any loss, damage or personal injury resulting from reliance on the information contained.

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Sensitive Choice is an initiative of the National Asthma Council Australia.

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