



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Poor indoor air quality can trigger asthma attacks

BISMARCK, N.D. – Governor John Hoeven has proclaimed October *Home Indoor Air Quality Month*. In recognition of the proclamation, the North Dakota Departments of Human Services and Health are reminding residents that indoor environments can contribute to asthma - a serious, potentially deadly health condition. Asthma impacts about eight percent of North Dakotans.

“As the temperature drops and people begin spending more time indoors, we want people to take steps to control indoor allergens, which can trigger asthma. Triggers can include secondhand smoke, dust mites, mold, cockroaches and rodents, pets, and even the odorless gas produced by indoor fuel-burning appliances such as gas stoves and furnaces,” said Kora Dockter, RN, who coordinates the North Dakota State Asthma Workgroup.

According to health officials, people can take the following actions to improve indoor air quality:

- Make your home a smoke free zone
- Vacuum and dust two or more times per week
- Keep pets out of bedrooms and away from fabric-covered furniture, carpets, and stuffed toys
- Cover mattresses and pillows with dust proof covers and wash bedding weekly in hot water
- Keep stuffed toys off beds
- Maintain low indoor humidity (30%-50%)
- Take steps to prevent mold such as running bathroom fans when a shower is on, and thoroughly cleaning up any mold if it occurs
- Don't leave food or garbage out, which attracts pests and rodents, and take appropriate steps to prevent and control them. Use caution and follow directions carefully if using pesticides.
- Make sure that fuel-burning appliances have proper ventilation

“Asthma is one of the most common chronic childhood diseases. Yet, serious episodes and hospitalizations may be preventable if asthma is diagnosed and properly managed,” Dockter said. “If you think you or your child might have asthma, talk to your medical provider.”

The Children's Special Health Services Unit of the North Dakota Department of Human Services can help pay for services related to the diagnosis and treatment of moderate to severe asthma, as well as other special health conditions affecting children from newborn to age 21. For information, call 1-800-755-2714 or e-mail dhscshs@state.nd.us.

For more information about indoor air quality issues, contact the health department at 701-328-5188. Asthma fact sheets are online at www.health.state.nd.us/chronicdisease/FactSheets.htm.