

Lung Irritants

What are lung irritants?

Lung irritants are things in the environment that may make your symptoms and breathing worse. Irritants such as dust, chemicals, and smoke can trigger coughing, wheezing or an increase in sputum.

It is important to know what irritants cause you problems so you can avoid them. You should also try to avoid things you are allergic to such as pollens, cat or dog fur or certain foods.

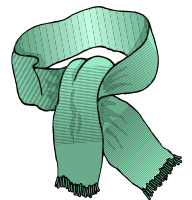
If you cannot avoid an irritant, use your short-acting bronchodilator such as salbutamol, 20 to 30 minutes before you are exposed.

How does moisture help?

Your respiratory system works better if it is moist. Too little moisture makes the protective mucous in your nose and lungs dry, thick and hard to cough up. This means that your lungs cannot fight infection as well. Too much moisture in the air makes breathing harder for some people.

How does weather affect breathing?

Extreme hot, cold, windy or damp weather may make breathing hard. Exercise indoors when the weather is bad. Before going out into very cold weather, wrap a scarf around your mouth and nose or wear a mask to warm the air you are breathing.



How can I avoid indoor air pollution?

Keep your home as dust-free as you can. Change your furnace filter often. Avoid using strong smelling cleaners, perfumes and deodorants. Above all, keep your home smoke-free.

What about outdoor air pollution?

Pay attention to the Air Quality Index (AQI) for outdoor pollution. The AQI is often reported with the weather forecast in the newspaper, radio, television and on the internet.