

# Benefits of Consumer Specialty Products in Controlling Asthma

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From 1980 to 1998, the number of people with asthma has more than doubled from 6.7 million to 17.3 million, with an estimated 4.8 million being children. One of the primary components of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) efforts to combat asthma is to educate people on how to control exposure to indoor allergens and triggers. Recent research underscores the importance of this effort, especially as it relates to children. A study published in the journal *Pediatrics*, for example, reported that eliminating household pollutants and allergens could result in a nearly 40% decrease in doctor diagnosed asthma among children ages 6 and younger.<sup>1</sup> Another recent study concluded that children at high risk for developing asthma are less likely to do so if their exposure to allergy triggers is reduced when they are infants.<sup>2</sup>

Various studies have proven the benefits of household consumer specialty products in deep cleaning and dust control, which is important for controlling exposure to indoor allergens and triggers. A US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) study conducted in a daycare center, for example, reported that improved housekeeping reduced total fungi by 61%, airborne dust by 52%, volatile organic compounds by 49%, and total bacteria by 40%.<sup>3</sup> A study of children's bedrooms in Boston-area homes showed that cleaning the floor – mopping or vacuuming – at least once a week resulted in lower levels of fungi per gram of dust on hard floor than in homes that did less frequent cleaning.<sup>4</sup>

Animal dander, such as from cats, dogs, cockroaches, and dust mites, also are common triggers for asthma in children. Normal laundering is a simple, inexpensive and effective way of removing dust mites and cat dander, according to a *Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology* study.<sup>5</sup> The results showed that detergents extracted more cat and dust mite allergen than either soap or water alone and that almost all allergens were extracted within five minutes of washing at 77°F (25°C).

Researchers from Johns Hopkins University concluded that cockroach allergens in inner city homes could be reduced by approximately 80% to 90%, with a combination of professional exterminating and regular household cleaning. They cautioned that even with aggressive cleaning, cockroach allergen levels may remain high enough to cause disease, which is most likely due to a combination of high allergen reservoirs and poor compliance with the cleaning regimen.<sup>6</sup>

These studies collectively demonstrate that consistent and regular use of consumer specialty products, such as household cleaners, detergents, and disinfectants, are powerful tools in controlling indoor allergens and triggers.

## *References*

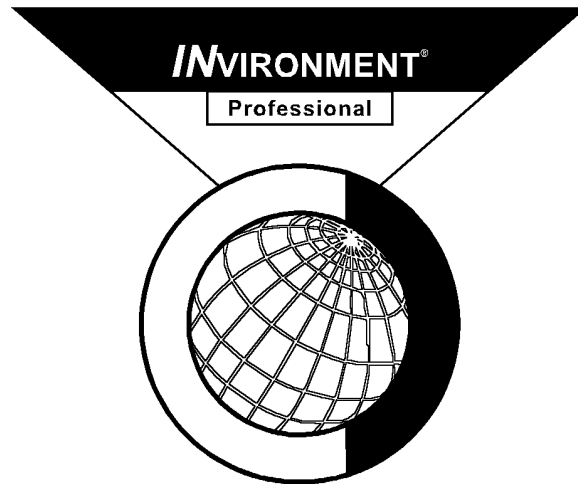
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