

Finding an Asthma-Friendly Rental Home

The answers to the questions are mostly either yes or no, but yes is not always good, nor is no bad. So the desirable answers are color coded blue and undesirable yellow. You want to be able to find more blue than yellow responses for the most asthma friendly rental home.

Asthma Trigger	Question	Yes	No
Tobacco Smoke	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there a no-smoking policy in place for the building/home? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If residents are allowed to smoke: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Have any of the past residents smoked in the unit/home you are considering? ○ Do any of the neighbors smoke? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the previous resident smoked, were any of the following things done to clean the apartment after that person left? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Carpets shampooed <input type="checkbox"/> Curtains cleaned <input type="checkbox"/> Unit painted <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ 		
Mold (A mold problem is a moisture problem so you'll be looking for both)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there a moldy smell to the unit/house? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there any evidence of leaks – discoloration on the ceiling or walls, peeling paint, soggy carpet or flooring? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there any visible sign of mold or mildew? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the bathroom have a fan and does it vent to the outside? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the kitchen have an exhaust fan and does it vent to the outside? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If there is a clothes dryer in the unit/house, does it vent to the outside? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the unit/house feel humid and if yes is there a dehumidifier for your use? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outside, are the gutters free of debris and do the downspouts drain away from the house? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Around the foundation, are there any access points (for water or pests) into the basement and are there soil troughs (indicating poor drainage away from the structure)? 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there lots of condensation on the window? The excess moisture can cause a mold problem. 			
Pests (Cockroaches and Rodents)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the property experienced a problem with cockroaches or rodents in the past? If yes how were they treated? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Pesticide Spray <input type="checkbox"/> Poisons <input type="checkbox"/> Traps <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there any signs of pest problems (droppings, pest dead or alive, damage caused by pests such as gnaw marks)? You'll need to look under and behind things – under sink, behind the refrigerator. 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is unit/house overall clean both inside and outside? If the space has not be properly cleaned and maintained, there could be hidden things that encourage pests. 		

Asthma Trigger	Question	Yes	No
Dust mites and Dust: This one is mostly on you – wet clean your hard surfaces, wash your bed linens frequently and put encasements on your pillows and mattresses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the home mostly carpeted? The carpet will need to be vacuumed (with a HEPA filter vacuum) frequently to help manage the dust and dust mites. Hard surface floors are better for managing asthma triggers. 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the unit/house feel humid? Dust mites (and mold!) thrive in humidity levels over 50%. 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is there a layer of dust on surfaces throughout the house? If yes ask when the last time the furnace filter was changed. To delve deeper, ask the MERV rating of the filters used, for healthy air in the unit/house, the MERV rating on the filter should be 8 or higher. 		
Warm blooded animals:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Did the previous tenant own a dog, cat or other warm blooded pet? If yes, make sure that the carpets have been shampooed and the hard surface floors steam cleaned before you move in. 		
Chemicals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are pesticides sprays or foggers used in the unit or home or common area at any time? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are air fresheners or strongly scented cleaning products used in the common areas of the building? 		
Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) and Wood Smoke – can come from appliances inside your home that burn fuels such as natural gas, kerosene and wood.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If there is a gas oven or cook top, is there a range hood that works and is vented to the outside? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If there is a fireplace, does the flue work properly? 		

Additional Issues Related to a Healthy Rental Home

A healthy home is one that is designed, constructed and renovated in a way that keeps its residents healthy. A healthy home should be dry, clean, pest-free, ventilated, safe, contaminant-free, maintained and temperature controlled. The considerations for an asthma-friendly rental home cover most of the principles of a healthy home. The list below covers the issues not related to the considerations for individuals with asthma.

Issue	Question	Yes	No
Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Was the structure built before 1978? If yes, has it been tested for lead and what were the results? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is there any peeling paint, inside or out? (If the structure was built before 1978 and no testing or lead has been done, the presence of peeling paint is a serious concern) 		
Radon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has the building/house been tested for radon and if results indicated a need for a mitigation system, was one installed? 		

Issue	Question	Yes	No
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If a radon mitigation system was installed, is it routinely checked or serviced? 		
Asbestos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is there any asbestos in the structure (insulation, pipe wrap, floor tiles are common places it is found)? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If asbestos is found in the structure, has it been properly maintained? 		
Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the unit/house have a working smoke detector on each floor? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the unit/house have working carbon monoxide detectors on each floor with a bedroom? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the carpet torn or overly worn? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there hand railings on at least one side of all stairs? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there working lights above the stairs and at each entry into the structure? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do the windows open and do they have working locks? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do the exterior door close properly and have working locks? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the hot water heater set at a temperature less than 120°F? 		
Temperature Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will you have control of the thermostat in the unit/house? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) system function and is it regularly serviced? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there any holes or openings around the windows or doors? 		
Maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there cracks or holes in the floor, walls or ceiling? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is there hot water? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the water pressure low? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do the toilets flush properly? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there any damaged or inoperable plumbing fixtures? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there adequate trash and garbage receptacles? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do all of the appliances work? 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there insufficient or damaged electrical outlets? 		