A Better Choice for a Healthier Home

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), people in the U.S. spend about 90% of their time indoors where they are exposed to concentrations of pollutants often 2 to 5 times higher than typical outdoor pollution. The indoor environment also collects allergens (such as animal dander, dust mite allergen, or mold). This can make it challenging for people with asthma and allergies to limit their exposure to these irritants and allergens.

Having good indoor air quality is an important part of having a healthy living space, and it is a particular concern for people affected by asthma and allergies. Everything inside the home, including its building materials, appliances, furnishings, electronics, fabrics, and more contribute to the home's air quality.

Standards That Matter

It's common to see the term "hypoallergenic" or "allergy free" on many products and services. But you may be surprised to know there are no regulations guiding these labels in the United States. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) says, "There are no Federal standards or definitions that govern the use of the term 'hypoallergenic.' The term means whatever a particular company wants it to mean."

In some cases, the word is just marketing. But people with asthma and allergies need claims to be backed by science.

Since 2006, the **Asthma & Allergy Friendly®** Certification Program has addressed the needs of the over 100 million people in the U.S. with asthma and/or allergies. It is a unique collaboration between the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America (AAFA) and Allergy Standards Limited (ASL) where products are tested to meet strict scientific standards developed by AAFA and ASL. Only products that meet these standards earn the right to carry the **Asthma & Allergy Friendly®** Certification Mark. This helps consumers with asthma and allergies find and choose products that reduce indoor asthma and allergy triggers and contribute to healthier indoor environments.

Asthma & Allergy Friendly®

aafa.org/certified

Look for this mark on product packages or company websites!

Visit aafa.org/certified to find a list of Certified products.

aafa Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America

allergy standards

The Asthma & Allergy Friendly® Certification Process

How We Develop Standards

AAFA and ASL conduct market research and listen to feedback from AAFA's asthma and allergy community about consumers' needs.

ASL reviews scientific research, clinical studies, related national and international standards and best practices.

ASL conducts experimental product testing.

ASL develops the standard for the product category, including strict criteria to which any products will be tested.

AAFA's independent Medical Scientific Council reviews the proposed standard and provides expert feedback.

The standard is sent to the board of directors for AAFA and ASL for review and approval.

How We Test Products

Products and companies are reviewed to see if their product is a good fit for the **Asthma & Allergy Friendly®** Certification Program.

Companies send their products to independent labs for testing. ASL manages the testing process to ensure strict guidelines are followed.

Products must pass every test required in the standard in order to qualify for **Asthma & Allergy Friendly®** Certification.

Each Certified product has a certificate and is associated with a unique certification code.

About the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America (AAFA)

Founded in 1953, AAFA is the oldest and largest nonprofit patient organization dedicated to improving the quality of life for people with asthma, allergies and related conditions through research, education, advocacy and support. For more information about asthma, allergies and AAFA's programs, visit **aafa.org**.

About Allergy Standards Limited (ASL)

ASL is a physician-led global certification company that prepares independent standards for testing a wide range of products to determine their suitability for people with asthma and individuals with associated allergies. For more information, visit **allergystandards.com**.

Sources of Asthma and Allergy Triggers and Irritants In Your Home

Our **Asthma & Allergy Friendly®** Certification Program can help. We test and certify products from the following categories:

- Air Cleaners (Portable and Whole Home)
- Bedding
- Cleaning Products
- Flooring
- Humidifiers
- HVAC/Furnace Filters
- Insulation
- Laundry
- Paint
- Pollen Screens
- Toys
- Vacuum Cleaners

BATHROOM

- Moisture and leaks encourage mold growth
- Cleaning products may release harmful gases

LIVING ROOM

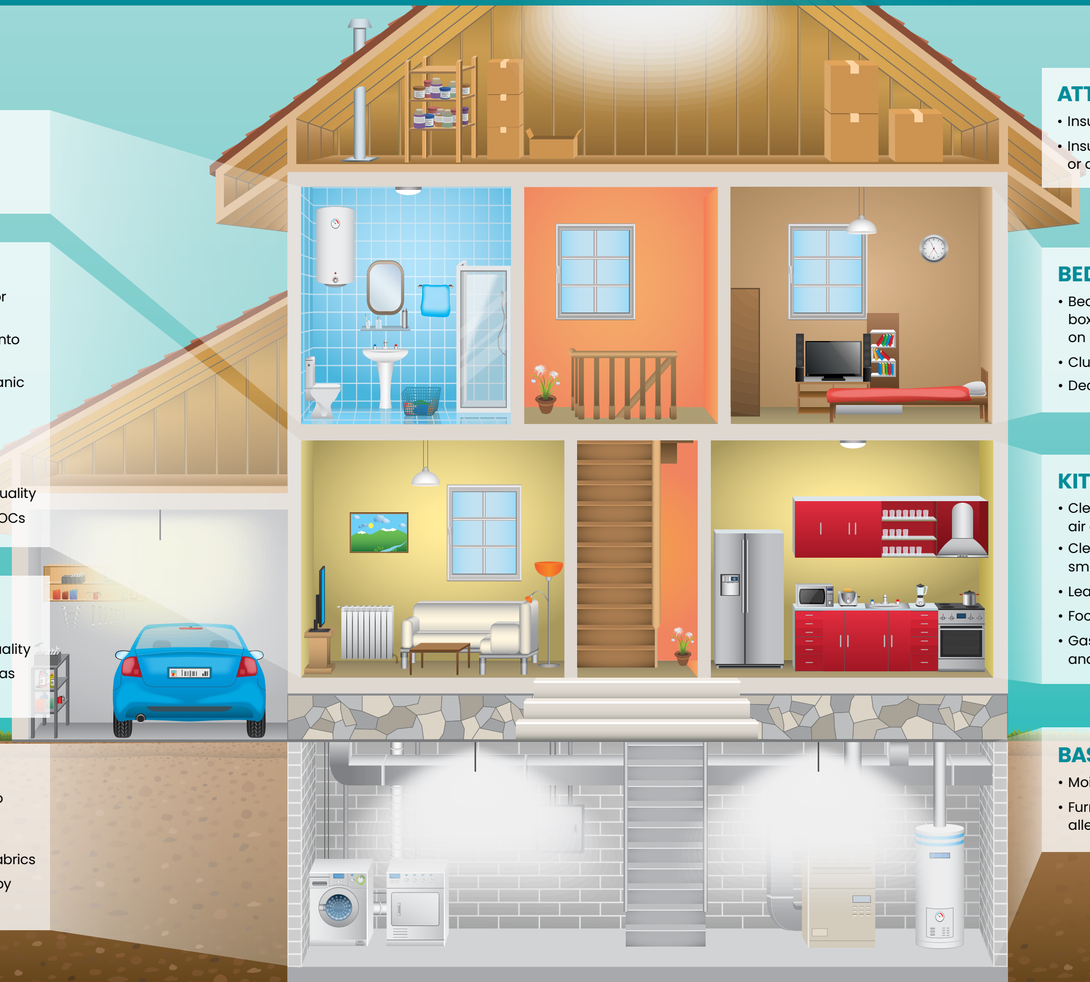
- Carpet traps allergens and provides a home for dust mites
- Vacuuming the carpet may release allergens into the air if the vacuum doesn't contain them
- Solid flooring may release harmful volatile organic compounds (VOCs) into the air
- Fabric furniture may collect dust mites and animal dander
- Clutter in the room attracts dust and allergens
- Fireplaces and wood stoves worsen indoor air quality
- Decorative coatings and paints may release VOCs

GARAGE

- Fumes from cars, appliances, and chemicals stored in your garage can worsen indoor air quality
- Improperly sealed doors can allow pests such as mice and cockroaches to enter your home

LAUNDRY

- Laundry appliances may not get hot enough to kill dust mites
- Some washing machines may not effectively remove allergens and irritants from washable fabrics
- Appliances may contribute to poor air quality by releasing ozone or VOCs



ATTIC/ROOF

- Insulation may not repel mold or mildew growth
- Insulation may release particles and VOCs into the air over time or during installation and removal

BEDROOM

- Beds and bedding are a major source of dust mites – mattresses, box springs, pillows, sheets, and blankets harbor the mites that feed on human skin cells
- Clutter in the room attracts dust and allergens
- Decorative coatings and paints may release VOCs

KITCHEN

- Cleaning products may release harmful chemicals and worsen air quality
- Cleaning products may not effectively remove particles, adding small particles in the air
- Leaks may contribute to mold growth
- Food may attract pests such as cockroaches and rodents
- Gas stoves and cooktops may release harmful levels of air pollution and fumes

BASEMENT

- Moisture and lack of ventilation can lead to mold growth
- Furnace and air conditioning filters may not effectively remove allergens or they may emit VOCs

Here are other ways to reduce triggers and irritants in your home:

Prevent pollen from getting inside by keeping windows and doors closed. And take your shoes off at your door.

Cover your hair or wash at night to remove pollen.

Reduce fabric items in your home as much as possible. Fabric curtains and throw pillows and blankets can attract dust mites and pet dander.

Remove scented candles, potpourri and wax melts.

Keep humidity in your home low. Dust mites and mold thrive on humidity greater than 50%.

If you have a pet, keep it out of your bedrooms.

Wash bedding, throw rugs and washable curtains weekly in water 130° or hotter.

Don't smoke or allow anyone to smoke in your home.

If you remodel, choose low-VOC building materials.

Summary of Selected Certification Standards

Portable Air Cleaners

- We place the air cleaner in an environmentally controlled chamber and introduce a proprietary dust containing known amounts of dust mite allergen, cat allergen, and pollen.
- We run the air cleaner and monitor the airborne particle levels in the chamber. We then suck all of the air out of the chamber through a filter to capture all allergens remaining in the air.
- We measure the level of allergens in the air when the air cleaner is running compared to a test when the air cleaner is not running.
- We require at least a 70% reduction in allergen levels when the air cleaner is running.
- We also test to make sure that the allergen is captured on the air cleaner filter, rather than being redistributed on surfaces in the chamber.

HVAC Furnace Air Filters

- We place the filter in a sealed test duct where we introduce allergen-containing test dust and blow it at the filter.
- We collect any dust that passes through the filter so that we can see how much of the dust and how much of the allergen has been removed by the filter.
- We measure the reduction in house dust mite allergen, cat allergen, pollen, and micro-particles.
- We test the filter when it is loaded with twice the dust load that would be expected to be presented to a HVAC/furnace filter in an average home over a 3-month period. This is to make sure that the filter still performs well even when it is heavily loaded.
- Our final test is to check that the seals at the edges of the filter are strong enough that the air (and also small particles) doesn't go around the edges, but instead are forced through the filter where the particles can be captured.

Vacuum Cleaners

- We apply test dust that contains cat allergen and dust mite allergen on a piece of carpet and then run the vacuum cleaner to test how much allergen is removed from the carpet.
- We use a controlled environmental chamber to test vacuum cleaners, and we ensure that the level of particles in the air during vacuuming remains below specified levels.
- We also test the vacuum cleaner on a hard floor surface with a crevice to make sure it can remove allergen from crevices.
- We run tests to check the strength of the seals in the vacuum cleaner and how it performs when the bag/receptacle is full.
- We empty a full dust bag/receptacle in a controlled chamber to ensure that allergen and particle levels in the air remain below specified levels.

Bedding

- We test whether the cover fabric can stop dust mite allergen from passing through to contact the skin. We pull dust and allergens across the fabric in a laboratory setting and set a strict limit for how well the fabric performs as a barrier.
- We apply dust mite allergen to the fabric and then test to ensure that the allergen can be removed by washing.
- We wash bedding products 10 times to ensure that they maintain their shape and appearance and can withstand regular washing.
- We test the bedding for residual chemicals such as azo dyes, pesticides, allergens, and irritants to make sure that chemicals that are known to be skin irritants are either not present or are present at such a low level that they are unlikely to cause a problem.

Other product categories we certify include laundry appliances and detergent, flooring, paint, insulation, and more. Further information on our full range of standards and Certified products can be found at: **aafa.org/certified**