

The sneak attack of allergy triggers

They're out there and they're waiting for you.

One minute you're fine, just minding your own business. The next minute you're sneezing, your eyes are itchy and your head is pounding. What's going on?

If you're one of the millions of people who have allergies, chances are you just came in contact with a "trigger." These pesky little nasties cause your allergies to flare up. Triggers are different for each person – what may bother one person could be no big deal for someone else. But some triggers seem to be common:

- Pet dander (old skin cells that are much smaller than human dandruff)
- Cockroaches
- Pollen
- Grass
- Mold
- Dust mites (tiny critters that live in dust)
- Foods (nuts, shellfish, dairy, eggs and wheat)
- Bee stings
- Latex (from work or medical exam gloves, bandages and other sources)
- Some medicines such as penicillin or aspirin

These triggers can be a crafty bunch. To anyone allergic, they're just waiting for you to go to sleep, take a walk, or cuddle the cat. Breathe in, touch or swallow and that's all it takes to spark an allergy attack.

But you can outsmart them. First, pay attention to where you are and what you're doing each time your allergy symptoms appear. Are you outside? Is the dog nearby? Did you just wake up? Are you in the basement? As you start to see a pattern, you can flag what bothers you. Talk with your doctor about your symptoms too. Armed with information, you can then take steps to get your allergies under control.

For food, medicine or latex allergies, usually it's important to cut them out completely. If your triggers include pollen or grass, try limiting your time outside whenever you're likely to come in contact with them. Many indoor allergy triggers such as mold, dust mites, pet dander and cockroaches can be controlled by keeping pets out of bedrooms, putting allergy covers on your mattress and pillow, and using a dehumidifier. Your doctor may also recommend allergy medicine or allergy shots.

For more information about allergies and triggers, visit the American Lung Association at lungusa.org.



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<http://www.webmd.com/allergies/guide/allergy-triggers>; <http://www.lungusa.org/about-us/our-impact/top-stories/spring-forward-asthma-allergies.html>

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