



Catholic Healthcare West

Ask the Expert
Arizona Republic

Rick Swearingen, D.O.

Q: Is it normal for my daughter's asthma to get worse as the weather turns warmer?

A: Absolutely. Nearly 90 percent of kids who have asthma also have allergies. As the weather warms up, and as pollen levels increase with the blooming flowers and trees, people with allergic asthma begin to cough or wheeze, as well as experience shortness of breath, rapid breathing or tightening of the chest.

When a person with allergic asthma inhales allergens in the air, which may include pollen, pet dander or dust mites, they experience a tightening in the muscles around their airways, in addition to inflammation of the airway. Please know there are some things you can do to help your daughter avoid allergens that may trigger her allergic asthma that include but are not limited to:

- Avoid being outside at dawn and dusk when pollen levels are highest.
- Shower before you go to bed to rinse allergens from your hair and body.
- Keep your windows closed at night, using your air conditioner to keep your home cool and dry.
- Eliminate items in your bedroom that have a tendency to collect dust, including stuffed animals, collectibles and pillows.
- Keep your house clean and dusted to remove dust mites and dander.
- Vacuum at least twice a week if you have carpet, and be sure to change the bag often.
- Wash drapes, dust ruffles and bedding frequently.
- Take your shoes off before coming inside to avoid tracking pollen into your home.
- Change your air filters frequently to help clean the air in your home.

Be sure to talk to your child's pediatrician or your family doctor to see if they recommend any other preventive measures to help prevent an asthma attack

Rick Swearingen, D.O., is the medical director of Catholic Healthcare West's (CHW) Urgent Care in Ahwatukee, located at 4545 East Chandler Boulevard. For more information, please call 480.728.4000. CHW's Urgent Care centers are open from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m., every day of the year, including holidays.

