

## ASSESSING HOUSEHOLD PRODUCTS AND ASTHMA

### STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Some household chemicals can make asthma worse. These include lung irritants (see asthma basics) such as chlorine bleach and ammonia, solvent products (acetone and paint thinner), and products with strong fragrances or odors. It is best to eliminate these from the home.

### BACKGROUND

### ASSESSMENT

- Review information from baseline questionnaire and walkthrough.
- Tour home and repeat (Chemicals and Irritants) section in the HEC to make a list of potentially hazardous products and where they are stored. Check in tracking document which products are present.
- Ask patient about their use of these products. Assess prior education received and knowledge.
- Divide the products into higher priority and lower priority products.

Higher Priority products include banned products, pesticides labeled WARNING or DANGER, pesticide dusts, cleaning products containing bleach or ammonia, solvent products used once per week or more and any other products reported by child to trigger asthma.

Lower Priority products include corrosive drain, oven, and toilet bowl cleaners; pesticide products not included in higher hazard group; solvent products used less than once per week; air fresheners; fragranced products; and volatile organic compounds (VOCs) such as gasoline, acetone and lacquer thinner and other than solvents.

### EDUCATIONAL MESSAGES

- Some household chemicals can be hazardous to use or store in the home.
- Some household chemicals can make asthma worse. These include lung irritants such as chlorine bleach and ammonia, solvent products that are used frequently, and products with strong fragrances or odors. It is best to eliminate these from the home.
- Choosing less-hazardous products can help to make the home safer. If possible, avoid products marked DANGER or WARNING on the label or other products identified as high hazard.
- Dispose of high hazard products safely (refer to summary table and protocol for specific disposal instructions)

- Pesticides should be your last resort in solving home pest problems. Try to use non-chemical methods such as traps, barriers, or mechanical removal if possible.
- Provide caregiver with list of hazardous products present in home and instructions for disposal and alternatives. **(Use form included with the checklist to prepare list.)**
- All chemical products should be kept out of reach of children and pets, either on higher shelves or in locked cabinets.
- Flammable products should be kept far away from the furnace, hot water heater, or other sources of heat or flame.
- Products containing chlorine bleach should not be mixed with other products.
- If hazardous products must be used, follow label directions regarding safety protection, such as goggles, gloves, and ventilation.
- Dispose of hazardous products properly. Call the Hazards Line (296-4692) for more information on how to dispose of hazardous products.

## ACTIONS

CHW ACTIONS	CAREGIVER ACTIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suggest safer alternatives to hazardous products.</li> <li>• Educate on safe use and disposal of hazardous household products.</li> <li>• Make sure that cabinets have child locks.</li> <li>• Make sure products are completely closed in their original containers.</li> <li>• Avoid buying products that contain bleach or ammonia.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remove hazardous products from home and dispose at your local hazardous waste site or waste mobile and use a safer alternative.</li> <li>• Avoid use of pesticides and use non-chemical methods to control pests.</li> <li>• Avoid use of irritants which trigger asthma.</li> <li>• Move flammable products away from fire or heat sources.</li> <li>• Move hazardous products out of reach of children.</li> <li>• Move hazardous products stored in unsafe containers to safe and labeled ones, or dispose of safely.</li> <li>• Use proper safety methods when using hazardous products, such as wearing gloves and using adequate ventilation.</li> <li>• Store hazardous products outside the home (such in a shed or garage) and above flood levels.</li> <li>• If you work with hazardous products at work, shower and change clothes, either prior to coming home or at the door and wash work</li> </ul>

	clothes separately.
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#### FOLLOW-UP VISITS

- Education as needed
- Review hazardous materials list
- Assist caregiver with disposal referral as needed

#### SUPPLIES

- None

#### EDUCATION HANDOUTS

- Hazardous products list for caregiver

#### REFERRALS

- **King County Hazards Line:** 1-888-TOXIC ED for information on disposal of hazardous products.
- **Washington Toxics Coalition:** 206-632-1545 for information on safer alternatives.