When should I see an asthma specialist?
- When asthma is uncontrolled, or difficult to control on current asthma medications
- If you have a history of life-threatening asthma attacks or you have taken more than 2 oral steroids in the past year
- To receive injectable asthma or allergy medications
- For personalized asthma or allergy instruction and advice

What does a specialist offer?
We offer a dedicated team of pulmonologists, allergists and a nurse practitioner to provide evidence-based individualized asthma and allergy care. To learn more, visit asthma.osu.edu or friend us on Facebook (search: OSU Asthma Center).
Asthma symptoms can be triggered by exposure to things you are allergic to or irritants in the air. Improve the air quality in your home with the following tips:

- Request a non-carpeted room in the newest dorm
- Request a non-smoking roommate who is neat and prefers a clean living environment
- Use low fume cleaning products. For recommendations, visit www.epa.gov/iaq/voc.html
- Clean your room well when you move in
- Vacuum and clean your room at least once a week
- Keep your environment clutter free
- Limit exposure to smoke and air pollution
- Avoid air fresheners, scented candles and other strong fragrances

Allergies
If you are aware of your specific allergies, try to limit exposure with the following tips. Keep in mind that any change in environment such as visiting friends or family may trigger breathing symptoms.

Dust mite allergy
Dust mites are microscopic and commonly found in upholstered furniture and bedding. The bedroom typically has the highest number of dust mites. Treatment consists of limiting exposure and reducing the dust mite population.

- Encase your mattress and pillows in allergen-proof coverings
- Limit upholstered furniture, rugs and stuffed animals
- Wash your bedding in hot (>130°F) water every week
- Wear a mask when dusting or vacuuming
- Leave the room for 30–60 minutes after vacuuming (to allow the dust to settle)
- Use a HEPA vacuum if possible
- Consider using a HEPA filter in your sleeping area
- Keep humidity <50 percent and room temperatures <70 degrees.

Is my asthma controlled?
Your asthma is controlled if you are able to go to school, work, play and sleep with minimal asthma symptoms. Other indicators include the following:

- Rescue medication ≤ 2 times per week during the day (do not count pre-med for exercise)
- Rescue medication ≤ 2 times per month during the night
- Peak flow is greater than 80 percent of your personal best reading.

If your asthma is not controlled, it is important to see a provider for an evaluation. If you are experiencing severe symptoms, go to the nearest emergency room.

Seasonal allergy (trees, grass, ragweed)
- Keep the windows closed when pollen levels are elevated
- Monitor pollen counts and limit your time outdoors when the levels are high

Cockroaches, mice or mold allergy
Cockroach and mouse allergen can remain in the home for up to 12 months after extermination. Prevent or limit a pest problem by removing food and water sources and blocking entry into the home. Control mold growth by eliminating water or dampness in or around the home.

- Dispose of empty food containers or wrappers
- Wash glasses, utensils and plates after use
- Remove trash regularly
- Keep all food items in sealed containers
- Clean up water, liquid or food spills immediately
- Report any plumbing leaks
- Seal openings around pipes, sockets or lights that may allow pests to enter
- Report pest activity immediately and request treatment

Pet allergy
Pet dander can remain in a home for years after the animal is removed, so avoid homes or apartments with pets or those previously inhabited by pets. If you cannot avoid the animal, the following tips may be helpful:

- Keep the animal out of your sleeping area at all times
- Avoid sitting or lying on furniture frequently used by the animal
- Wash the animal (dogs and cats) weekly
- Minimize contact with the animal
- Wash your hands immediately after any contact

Moving into your campus home is exciting on many levels. For most students, living in a dorm or an apartment is the first opportunity to live independently. For those with asthma and allergies, a new environment can be filled with unwanted breathing triggers. Triggers include allergens or irritants that can cause wheezing, shortness of breath, sneezing, itchy eyes or a stuffy nose. Symptoms can be mild or severe and could lead to uncontrolled asthma or an asthma attack.