



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

News Release

LINDA LINGLE
GOVERNOR

CHIYOME LEINAALA FUKINO M.D.
DIRECTOR
Phone: (808) 586-4410
Fax: (808) 586-4444

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**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HAWAI'I PUBLIC HOUSING AUTHORITY
PROMOTE CATCH-A-ROACH PROJECT**

HONOLULU – May is National Asthma Awareness Month, and the Hawai'i State Department of Health (DOH) urges the public to learn more about the potentially harmful health link between cockroaches and asthma. The Hawai'i Catch-a-Roach (Hopua Mai I Ka Elelu) Project, a collaboration between the Hawai'i Public Housing Authority and the Hawai'i Department of Health, is an awareness campaign that strives to reduce exposure to asthma triggers, specifically cockroaches. During the month of May, residents living in the 375-unit Kalihi Valley Homes will receive non-toxic cockroach traps and educational brochures demonstrating ways to minimize cockroach exposure and control asthma.

A recent study estimates that 50 percent of Hawai'i's residents with asthma are allergic to cockroaches. Specifically, certain proteins found in cockroach droppings and saliva can cause allergic reactions or trigger asthma symptoms in some individuals. Also, decaying body parts of cockroaches can trigger or worsen asthma.

"Reducing triggers in the home is an effective way to control asthma," said Health Director Chiyome Fukino, M.D. "The Department of Health is pleased to partner with the Hawai'i Public Housing Authority to address reducing household pests in the home. While cockroaches can cause many diseases, for those with asthma, the effects can be especially harmful. We encourage residents around the state to learn more about how to protect themselves or family members with asthma from exposure to cockroaches."

(more)

This project endeavors to raise awareness about effective strategies for limiting cockroach exposure. For example, keeping cockroaches from entering the home, maintaining a clean home, and using traps are all simple steps that can minimize the health effects of cockroaches.

With 12 percent of Hawai'i's children and 8 percent of adults having asthma, the Hawai'i Department of Health aims to reduce the number of preventable asthma exacerbations and emergency room visits and hospitalizations due to asthma.

For more information on the prevention and management of asthma, visit www.hawaii.gov/health.

Tips for getting rid of cockroaches in your home

- Don't let cockroaches enter your home (seal cracks in walls or around pipes, repair screens)
- Keep food and water away from cockroaches (starve them)
- Clear clutter to reduce places where cockroaches can hide (old newspapers, boxes)
- Use cockroach traps or baits
- If possible, avoid bug sprays, foggers and bombs since it may harm your lungs

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For more information, contact:
Gregg Kishaba, Asthma Program Coordinator
Hawaii Department of Health
Phone: (808) 692-7476
Fax: (808) 692-7461
Email: gregg.kishaba@doh.hawaii.gov

Additional Contact:
Alice Silbanuz, Public & Professional Education Coordinator
Hawaii Department of Health
Phone: (808) 586-4434
Email: alice.silbanuz@doh.hawaii.gov