



## House Dust Mite Allergy Patient Advice Sheet

You have been found to be allergic to house dust mite. This sheet describes the problem and some methods of allergen avoidance which can significantly improve your symptoms.

### ***The allergen***

House dust mites are microscopic animals that feed off fallen skin scales present in house dust and mould present on mattresses. They thrive in warm humid conditions such as centrally heated homes and particularly favour soft furnishings and bedding. The digestive enzyme allergen responsible for the symptoms is present within mite excreta. Female mites lay 25-50 eggs with a new generation produced every 3 weeks.

### ***Allergen avoidance***

It is possible to reduce exposure to the allergen by reducing the load in your home. Aim the measures for dust mite control at places in the home where you spend most time and dust-mite exposure is greatest (bedroom and living room).

### ***General Advice***

Wear a face mask during cleaning

Vacuum cleaner

- make sure it works efficiently and has a new bag
- high filtration vacuum cleaner is best
- vacuum furniture twice a week

Dust with a damp cloth - pelmets, window sills, cupboard tops and drawers.

Keep surfaces clear

Eliminate as many soft furnishings as possible

Fewer soft toys - put them away in cupboards, wash them regularly or put them in a plastic bag in the freezer overnight.

Use air conditioner or dehumidifier in damp basements (humidity between 30 and 50%)

Improve ventilation - open windows for 30minutes twice a day and turn down the heating

Cover hot air vents with a filter

## ***Bedroom***

Vacuum around base of bed, padded headboard, under the bed

Mattress zippered waterproof covering to enclose the mattress (wipe once a week) covered by washable blanket for comfort

Duvet/Pillows synthetic material, wash every 6 weeks Woollen blankets to be replaced with cotton cellular ones. Wash all bedding at 60 C or above

## ***Living room***

Lightweight washable curtains or replace with wipeable blinds

Ideally replace carpets with wooden or vinyl flooring or treat carpets every 4 to 6 months with a product like Acarosol (a dust mite killer) followed by vacuuming.

## ***Children***

Keep affected children out of the house during cleaning and for a further 2 hours No furry toys in the bed

No bouncing on the bed Shower before going to bed

## ***Animals***

No pets in the bedroom at any time

## ***Vacuum cleaners***

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## ***Mattress and bedding covers***

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