

Dust Mite Allergies

Dust Avoidance

- Dust mites are the cause of house dust allergies.
- People become allergic to the droppings that dust mites leave behind.
- Dust mites eat the skin scales that are shed when we are sleeping or changing clothing, so they are mostly in the bedroom and are mainly found in mattresses or carpets.
- Dust mites thrive in humidity- if you can maintain indoor humidity at less than 40 per cent, dust mites won't survive as easily.
- Bedside vaporizers are not recommended for those with dust mite allergies.

Mattresses

- Mattresses and box springs (including new ones) should be completely encased in medical-grade, dust-proof covers.
- The most comfortable and effective dust-proof covers are only available at medical supply companies. Inexpensive or vinyl covers are okay for the box spring.
- After just two weeks of using a medical-grade dust-proof mattress cover, there will be 90 per cent fewer dust mites in the mattress.
- Wash dust-proof mattress covers every six months, at minimum.

Washing Bedding

- Pillows must be machine washable and should be washed monthly, or covered with medical grade dust-proof pillow covers. (If using dust-proof covers, wash the pillow covers monthly)
- Hot water washing kills the dust mites and removes the allergen, while dry cleaning will kill dust mites but will not remove the allergen.
- Polyester pillows stand up to frequent washing the best, however, feather or down pillows can be used if they are washed monthly or covered with dust-proof covers.
- Everything else on the bed (sheets, blankets) should be washed in hot water at least once a month, even stuffed toys.

Floors and Dusting

- Hardwood or linoleum floors are better for those with dust mite allergies, than carpets.
- There are no commercially available cleaning agents in Canada that can get rid of dust mites in carpets/rugs.
- Although vacuuming helps, you cannot rid carpets of dust mites.
- For floors without carpet, using a wet mop or an electrostatic wipe (i.e. Swiffer®) works best.
- Using a damp cloth or electrostatic wipe also works best for furniture dusting.
- If possible, keep dust-sensitive persons away when dusting or vacuuming.
- Dust-proof masks, available at hardware stores, may be helpful if the person cleaning has dust mite allergies.