

## Dust Mite Control

Dust mite allergy is one of the most common allergies encountered in the world. It is also one of the most important risk factors for the development of asthma. Patients who are exposed to large quantities of dust mites have a higher chance to develop bronchial asthma.

Dust mites are microscopic organisms. You cannot see them with the naked eye. They thrive better in humid, warm climates and feed off human dander to survive. It is the waste product of the mites in which humans are allergic.

Mites can be found on clothes, stuffed toys, mattresses, carpets, upholstered furniture, furniture coverings, draperies, blankets and pillows.

Dust mite control is one of the most important preventive measures that an allergic patient can do. You cannot achieve 100% dust control but by decreasing the amount of exposure but you will accomplish significant reduction in total allergy symptoms.

Most of your efforts should be directed toward the bedroom since you spend more than one third of your time there.

The following measures should be taken whenever it is possible and affordable.

Encase mattress, box-spring and pillows in zippered, rubberized air-tight covers. Reinforce zipper with wide tape.

2. Keep all clothing in the closet, with the door shut.
3. Avoid heavy curtains and Venetian blinds. Use window shades instead. If curtains are used, launder them frequently in hot water (every two weeks).
4. Eliminate upholstered furniture. Use plain wood or plastic chairs.
5. Wash blankets in hot water (130 degrees F) every two weeks. Avoid wool and down blankets.
6. Air conditioners can prevent the high heat and humidity that stimulate mite growth. Use a dehumidifier in damp basements.
7. Cover hot air vents with filters or close the vents and use an electric radiator.
8. Avoid wall pennants, macramé hangings, pictures and other dust collectors (e.g. stuffed animals, toys, models, books, etc.).
9. Clean drawers and closets with a damp cloth. Remove all exposed books, knickknacks and toys. Wear a face mask when making the bed and doing housecleaning.
10. If using a humidifier in the winter avoid over-humidification. Mites grow best at 75-80% relative humidity and cannot live at under 50% humidity. Use a humidifier gauge to maintain relative humidity at 40-50%.

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11. Air filters tend to be expensive and are more effective for airborne particulates like smoke. They are not as effective in removing dust particles.
12. Remove all carpeting if possible. Floors should be wood or linoleum. Clean floor with a damp or oiled mop daily. Ordinary vacuuming of carpeting is not adequate to remove mites.