



Dust Mite Avoidance Measures

House dust mites (HDM) are microscopic insects feed which feed on sloughed human skin. Optimal HDM growth occurs at a relative humidity of more than 50 % and a temperature between 65°F-75°F.

These invisible to the naked eye insects have their highest levels of infestation on pillows, mattresses, box springs, carpet, soft upholstered furniture, draperies and stuffed animals/toys.

Priority Avoidance Measures:

- Encase mattress and all pillows in allergen-proof covers. We recommend those made of vinyl or 6µm micro denier, or covers which are fabric backed with vinyl or urethane membrane.
- Wash bed linens weekly in hot water, at least 130°F), and damp wipe mattress covers weekly.
- Encase box spring in vinyl or plastic covers.
- Reduce clutter/toys/other collections throughout the house, but especially in the bedroom.
- Minimize visits to friends and relatives with feathered or furry pets.
- Vacuum or dust weekly. Make sure to wear a mask and leave area for 20 minutes after cleaning.
- Use a vacuum cleaner that incorporates a double-thickness bag and HEPA filter leak little allergen.
- Use Filtrete (3M) or “microclean” (DuPont) filters to reduce allergen leakage from your vacuum cleaner.
- Place stuffed animals in freezer overnight at least once a week, or wash in hot water weekly. Either method will kill the dust mites which may have infested your child’s toys.
- Hang comforters or bedspreads outside in dry, wintery weather. Hanging a comforter or bedspread outside in the summer months is not recommended because of other airborne allergens like pollen.
- Clean or replace heat/air conditioner filter as per manufacturer's instructions. Pleated 1-inch filters are more effective than loosely packed fiber filters.

Long-term Modifications:

- Reduce indoor relative humidity (RH) with air conditioning or the use of a dehumidifier 30%-45%RH is considered optimal.
- Humidity can also be controlled by increasing ventilation if outdoor conditions are cold and/or dry.
- Replace carpet with solid surface flooring, like wood, vinyl, linoleum or tile.
- Replace upholstered furniture with leather, vinyl, wood or plastic.
- Replace drapery with shades or blinds which are easier to maintain or with washable curtains.
- Avoid living in basement or in room with cement slab floor. Preferably, bedrooms should be upstairs.

Your Allergist may recommend other measures like over the counter or prescription medications and allergy injections to better control your symptoms.

If you have questions about Dust Mite Avoidance Tips, feel free to contact our office at 614-760-0099. One of our staff would be happy to answer your questions about this topic and the different treatment options offered at Allergy & Asthma Clinics of Ohio.