

Allergy Clinic

Dust mites in your home

This leaflet is designed for people that have been diagnosed as being allergic to house dust mite. The measures described below should only be used if a diagnosis of an allergy to house dust mite has been made. This leaflet is intended for use in conjunction with advice from an allergist in our clinic.

Some allergies are caused by **house dust mite**. They can cause rhinitis (runny nose, eyes), asthma or eczema. If you are allergic to house dust mites, reducing the levels should reduce symptoms. This may also result in a reduction of medication.

What is house dust mite?

It is a very small and invisible living creature, living in everyone's home, despite normal cleaning.

Where does it live?

House dust mites are found in all homes, particularly the bedroom, in mattresses and bedding. It can also be found in carpets, upholstery, chairs, curtains etc.

How can I reduce the number of mites in my house?

It is essential to lower the levels of mites sufficiently to reduce symptoms. A slight reduction will have no effect as house dust mites keep breeding and multiplying. Therefore, you must **persist** with the measures stated below. Concentrate on **the bedroom area** as more mites are found there. It is best to do as many of the measures as possible, thoroughly and repeatedly, otherwise they are not effective.

Bedroom

1. Barrier mattress bedding covers

This is the single most effective measure; it is made of special fabric which does not let house dust mites through. If the mattress cover is used there is no need to Hoover the mattress. It forms a barrier between you and the house dust mite. These covers allow water/body moisture to pass through them (but not air), and are more comfortable than plastic mattress covers.

Many anti-allergy mattresses covers available are not effective. The following make has been shown to exclude house dust mites:

- 'Alprotec' by mail order from Advanced Allergy Technologies Ltd.
Telephone: 0161 998 1999, email: allergy@allergy.uk.com,
website: www.allergy.uk.com

A cheaper alternative is to cover the mattress with a plastic cover. These may be obtained from: Keys of Clacton Ltd, Stephenson Road, Clacton-on-Sea, Essex CO15 4XA. Telephone: 01255 432518, website: www.keysbedding.co.uk

As air can not pass through the covers they can be hot. This could be a problem if you have eczema. They can also pose a threat of suffocation to infants and children. Therefore, it is better to choose an air-permeable cover for duvets and pillows, such as:

- Alprotec Airflow (supply as above)
- Boots anti allergy covers (these are less effective on particle exclusion)

2. A clean bed

If you do not have bedding covers:

- **Hoover the mattress** once a week, paying particular attention to the area around the buttons. Arachicide sprays are **not** recommended, as they are of limited help and may be an irritant.
Please note: Do not do the hovering if you have an allergy to dust mites. You should stay out of the bedroom while the bed is being stripped, staying out for at least half an hour after the bed is remade.
- **Hot wash all bedding** on a 60 degree cycle every four to six months. This includes pillows, quilts, blankets, duvets (try to select materials which allow this). If a hot wash is not possible, dry-clean them. A cooler wash will only partly kill the mites, but is better than nothing.
- An alternative to washing **pillows** is to **freeze** them. Place in the deep freeze for eight hours every month. This kills the house dust mite.
- Padded bed heads should be removed; the house dust mite will live in it.

3. Children's bedrooms

If they have bunk beds, the child with the allergy should be on the top bed.

Soft toys kept on the bed will contain house dust mite. Keep these to a minimum. Wash or freeze them at least once a month. You do not need to deprive a child of a favourite night time toy.

4. General tips

- For those with a severe allergy, have vinyl or wood floors instead of fitted carpets in the bedroom.
- Avoid heavy curtains. Use lightweight washable curtains or blinds that can be easily washed and cleaned.
- Hoover at least once a week.
- Damp dust the room at least once a week.
- If you have the allergy and do the vacuuming, cleaners which do not blow out dust may be helpful, for example, Dyson.

Other rooms

Thorough hoovering (carpets, sofas, upholstered chairs etc) and damp dusting will help. Avoid heavy upholstery and curtains as above, so that they can be washed/cleaned easily.

For further information, please telephone the allergy nurses. Their contact number is 01223 348112.



Addenbrooke's is smoke-free. You cannot smoke on site. For advice on quitting, contact your GP or the NHS smoking helpline free, 0800 169 0 169

Please ask if you require this information in other languages, large print or audio format: 01223 216032 or patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk

Informacje te można otrzymać w innych językach, w wersji dużym drukiem lub audio. Zamówienia prosimy składać pod numerem: 01223 216032 lub wysyłając e-mail: patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk

Polish

Se precisar desta informação num outro idioma, em impressão de letras grandes ou formato áudio por favor telefone para o 01223 216032 ou envie uma mensagem para: patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk

Portuguese

Если вам требуется эта информация на другом языке, крупным шрифтом или в аудиоформате, пожалуйста, обращайтесь по телефону 01223 216032 или на вебсайт patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk

Russian

若你需要此信息的其他語言版本、大字體版或音頻格式，請致電 01223 216032 或發郵件到: patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk

Cantonese

Bu bilgiyi diger dillerde veya büyük baskılı ya da sesli formatta isterseniz lütfen su numaradan kontak kurun: 01223 216032 veya asagidaki adrese e-posta gönderin: patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk

Turkish

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Bengali

Document History

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