

House dust mites



House dust mites are tiny creatures that are not visible to the naked eye. They live off human skin scales and thrive in humid environments. Mites are found in bedding, carpets, soft furnishings and clothing. In people allergic to dust mite, it is often not the mite itself but proteins in their droppings which cause the allergy.

House dust mite home remedies

Avoiding exposure to dust mites is the best strategy for controlling dust mite allergy. While you cannot completely eliminate dust mites from your home, you can significantly reduce their number and hence decrease dependency on medications.

- **Use allergen-proof bed covers.** Keep your mattress and pillows in dustproof or allergen-blocking covers. These covers, made of tightly woven fabric, prevent dust mites from colonizing or escaping from the mattress or pillows. Encase box springs in allergen-proof covers.
- **Wash bedding weekly.** Wash all sheets, blankets, pillowcases and bedcovers in hot water that is at 60 C to kill dust mites and remove allergens. If bedding can't be washed hot, put the items in the dryer for at least 15 minutes at a temperature 60 C to kill the mites. Then wash and dry the bedding to remove allergens. Freezing non-washable items such as soft toys for 24 hours also can kill dust mites, but this won't remove the allergens.
- **Keep humidity low.** Maintain a relative humidity below 50 percent in your home. A dehumidifier or air conditioner can help keep humidity low.

- **Choose the right bedding.** Avoid bedcovers that trap dust easily and are difficult to clean frequently.
- **Buy washable stuffed toys.** Wash them often in hot water and dry thoroughly. Also, keep stuffed toys off beds.
- **Remove dust.** Use a damp cloth rather than dry materials to clean up dust. This prevents dust from becoming airborne.
- **Vacuum regularly.** Vacuuming carpeting and upholstered furniture removes surface dust — but vacuuming isn't effective at removing most dust mites and dust mite allergens. Use a vacuum cleaner with a double-layered microfilter bag or a high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter to help decrease house-dust emissions from the cleaner. If your allergies are severe, stay out of the area being vacuumed while someone else does the work. Wait about two hours before going back in the vacuumed room.
- **Declutter.** If it collects dust, it also collects dust mites. Remove knickknacks, tabletop ornaments, books, magazines and newspapers from your bedroom.
- **Remove carpeting and other dust mite habitats.** Carpeting provides a comfortable habitat for dust mites. This is especially true if carpeting is over concrete, which holds moisture easily and provides a humid environment for mites. If possible, replace wall-to-wall bedroom carpeting with tile, wood, linoleum or vinyl flooring. Consider replacing other dust-collecting furnishings in bedrooms, such as upholstered furniture, non-washable curtains and horizontal blinds.