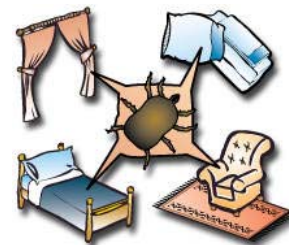


GETTING YOUR ASTHMA UNDER CONTROL: CONTROLLING DUST MITE ALLERGIES AT HOME A FACTSHEET FROM THE MOUNT SINAI ASTHMA PROGRAM



Did you know...?

Dust mites can cause symptoms such as coughing, wheezing, shortness of breath and chest tightness in people who have asthma and are allergic to dust mites. Dust mites are tiny bugs that are not visible to the human eye. They feed off of the dead skin of humans and animals and increase in number in humid and warm environments. They live in bedding (e.g., mattresses, box springs, bed sheets, blankets, etc.), carpeting, cloth furniture, stuffed toys, curtains and other draperies. Having dust mites does not mean that your house is not clean. Dust mites are present in most homes, no matter how clean the home. They are not harmful unless you are allergic to them and either have asthma, nasal allergies or eczema.

How do I know if I have dust mite allergies?

An allergy test by a doctor can help determine if your asthma and allergy symptoms may be due to contact with dust mite allergen.

What can I do to control my contact with dust mites?

Since most of your time is spent in the bedroom, you should focus most of your attention there. The following tips can help decrease your contact with dust mites:

- * Covers your mattress, pillows, and box spring with special allergy-proof covers.
- * Wash your bedding (e.g., sheets, comforters, blankets, etc.) once a week in very hot water with a detergent soap.
- * If possible, remove *all* stuffed animals from your home. If you are unable to do so, then limit the number of stuffed animals to a few items that can be washed once a week.
- * If possible, remove *all* carpet and cloth furniture from your home **or** at least from the bedroom. Washable rugs can be used, but should be washed once a week in hot water.
- * Replace curtains and draperies with blinds or shades and wipe them down at least once a week. If curtains or draperies are used, wash them once a week in hot water.
- * Vacuum the carpeted areas of your home at least twice a week using a vacuum cleaner with a HEPA filter or a double thickness vacuum bag.
- * Keep the humidity in your home below 50% at all times. Dust mites need water from the air to survive. Use of an air-conditioner and/or a dehumidifier can help control the humidity in the home.

Special allergy-proof covers for your mattress, pillows and box spring can be ordered from one of these companies:

- Allergy Clean Environments – 800-882-4110
- Allergy Control Products – 800-422-3878
- National Allergy Supply Inc. – 800-522-1448
- Mission Allergy – 877-662-5537
- Allergy & Asthma Technology Ltd. – 800-621-5545