

## Dust Mite Avoidance

- ❖ Dust Mites are microscopic, insect-like creatures related to the tick and spider family. They feed primarily on scales from human skin and are found in moist areas of the home. High levels can be found in mattresses, pillows, bed linens, carpets, draperies, upholstered furniture, and stuffed toys.
- ❖ Walking, vacuuming, cleaning or changing bed linen easily stirs up dust mites. When these allergens are in the air, they are more likely to cause an allergic reaction such as runny nose, sneezing, itching, nasal stuffiness, cough or other asthma symptoms.
- ❖ Dust mites thrive in a moist environment. A humidity level at more than 50% is the best environment for them to survive.

## Measures to reduce dust mites in the home:

1. Encase the mattress, box springs and pillows in "allergy proof" covers. Wash the bed sheets, mattress pad, blankets and bedspread WEEKLY in the HOTTEST temperature your washing machine has.
2. Limit the number of stuffed toys a child has in the bedroom. After children are finished playing with them, enclose them in a plastic bag or wash them weekly.
3. Remove carpeting from the bedroom and other areas of the home. Carpeting placed over concrete floors, such as in basements, tends to trap moisture and promotes dust mites. Hardwood or linoleum floors are preferable for patients with allergies.
4. Reduce the indoor humidity to less than 50% and maintain room temperature at 70 degrees or less. A dehumidifier may help to reduce humidity. Use vents and fans in the bathroom and kitchen to remove moisture.
5. It takes two hours for dust mites to settle, so try to clean when the allergic patient isn't home and avoid cleaning the bedroom at night.

For more information you can visit:

<http://www.acaai.org/allergist/allergies/Types/Pages/default.aspx>

<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/tutorials/allergiestodustmites/id039204.pdf>