

ALLERGEN AVOIDANCE

Avoidance measures for dust mites

First: Bedrooms

Cover pillows and mattresses with zippered covers which are impermeable to mites and mite allergens.

Wash sheets, pillowcases, and blankets in warm water with detergent or dry in an electric dryer on the hot setting weekly; when necessary, blankets should be replaced with those that can be washed. Comforters should be removed.

Use washable, vinyl, or roll-type window covers.

Remove clutter, soft toys, and upholstered furniture.

Where possible, carpets should be removed or replaced with area rugs that can be cleaned/washed.

Second: Rest of house

Reduce upholstered furniture, particularly old sofas.

Replace carpets with polished flooring where possible. Carpets on concrete slabs or over poorly ventilated crawl spaces are a problem and should be replaced with polished flooring if possible.

Vacuum weekly using a cleaner with a HEPA filtration system.

Window coverings should be washable, vinyl, or roll type.

Control humidity to <50 percent relative humidity at normal temperatures, ie, 68 to 72°F.

Third: Changing houses*

In general, allergy sufferers should not be encouraged to move from their home except in those cases where they are living in basements or overtly damp housing.

Individuals who are allergic to mites (or molds) should be advised about the potential benefit of moving to an apartment (2nd floor or higher) or a house with 2nd floor bedrooms and wooden floors.

* The average family in the United States moves approximately every four years.

Avoidance measures for animal dander

Removing animals from the house

Keep animals outside, eg, in garage or kennel; restricting animals to certain rooms has not been shown to be effective.

Once animal has been removed, the premises should be cleaned thoroughly.

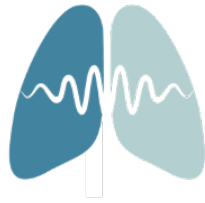
Controlling allergen with an animal in the house

Difficult because the animal contains 10-50 mg of major allergen, while the quantities of airborne allergen are only 5-20 ng/m³. Using an air filter can only reduce airborne allergen.

Reduce reservoirs: remove carpets, reduce upholstered furniture to a minimum, replace drapes with blinds, or/and vacuum clean weekly using a vacuum with good filtration, ie, double thickness bags and/or HEPA filtration.

Room air filters: HEPA or electrostatic (maintenance data are better defined for HEPA).

Washing cats does not reduce allergen levels significantly. Washing dogs twice a week may help.



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Indoor allergen	Recommendations for reducing exposure
Animal dander	Remove animal from house, or at minimum, keep animal out of patient's bedroom. Keep pet in a room with a HEPA filter and clean the filter frequently.
	Cover air ducts that lead to bedroom with filters
	Use air filters and vacuums with HEPA filters. Clean filters frequently.
Dust mites	Less costly
	Encase mattress, pillows, and boxspring in allergen-impermeable covers. Finely woven covers for pillows plus duvets are preferable.
	Wash bedding weekly in warm water with detergent or use electric dryer on hot setting.
	Reduce indoor humidity to <50 percent
	More costly
	Remove carpets from the bedroom
Cockroaches	Replace old upholstered furniture with leather, vinyl, or wood
	Use poison bait or traps to control. Consult professional exterminator for severe infestation.
	Periodically clean home thoroughly.
	Secure food and garbage.
Indoor mold	Fix water leaks
	Clean moldy surfaces with dilute bleach solution.
	Fix water leaks.
	Reduce indoor humidity to <50 percent. Avoid use of humidifiers.
Rodents	Clean swamp (evaporative) coolers.
	Consult a professional exterminator.
	Periodically clean home thoroughly.
	Secure food and garbage.
	Repair holes in walls, doors, floors, and block other entry points.