

Allergen Avoidance Advice Sheets

House dust mite allergen reduction

Aims to reduce the amount of mite allergens in the home

Major strategies (WHO Strength of Recommendation A)

- Wash bedding regularly (every 1 – 2 weeks) at 55-60° C, if possible, to kill mites: (*washing with cold water removes 90% of mite allergens; washing at 55-60° C kills mites*)
- Wash pillows and duvets in hot water (55-60° C) and encase pillows and mattresses with protective coverings that have a pore size of 6 µm or less.
- Sufficient ventilation of dwellings to decrease humidity; aim to reduce indoor relative humidity to below 50% and avoid damp housing conditions

Additional strategies

- Use a good quality vacuum cleaner (if possible, one fitted with HEPA filter)
- Use a damp duster when dusting and cleaning surfaces
- Replace wall to wall carpets with linoleum or wooden floors which can be wiped clean
- Remove/reduce curtains and soft furnishings in the bedroom
- Replace fabric-covered seating with leather or vinyl
- Remove soft toys from the bedroom; wash them at 55-60° C or freeze them (in a kitchen deep-freezer) to kill house dust mites
- Exposure of mattresses, rugs and carpets to direct strong sunlight (for more than 3 hours) kills mites and can be used in appropriate regions.

Pollen avoidance

Provides mechanical barriers to pollen contact

- Keep windows closed at peak pollen times.
- Wear glasses or sunglasses to help prevent pollens entering the eyes
- Consider wearing a mask over nose and mouth to prevent inhalation of pollens at peak time
- Use air-conditioning where possible
- Install car pollen filters where possible

Pet allergen avoidance

Reduces the amount of pet allergen indoors

- If possible, find another home for the pet, and do not introduce new animals into the home. If the pet is not removed from the home, these measures may be helpful;

1. Exclude pets from bedrooms and if possible keep pets outdoors
2. Vacuum carpets, mattresses and upholstery regularly.
3. Change clothes before going to school/work if you have had contact with any animal (for example, horse/cat/dog)

Cockroach allergen avoidance

Removes the cockroaches, eliminates the places and conditions in which they can live, and removes allergens

- Eradicate cockroaches with appropriate insecticide bait
- Seal cracks in floors and ceilings
- Enclose all food
- Do not store waste in the home
- Scrub floors with water and detergent to remove allergens

Mould allergen avoidance

Prevents mould from growing, and mould spores from becoming airborne during mould removal

Indoors:

- Use dehumidifiers in the home if relative humidity is constantly high (*above 50%*)
- Ensure heating, ventilation or air-conditioning systems are properly maintained
- Use 5% ammonia solution to remove mould from bathrooms and other contaminated surfaces
- Replace carpets with hard flooring; replace wallpaper with paint
- Repair indoor water damage immediately