

Mass Lung & Allergy, PC

# Dust Mite Allergy

## Avoidance Strategies for Dust Mite Allergy

### Special points of interest:

- If it is a hard surface, WIPE IT
- If it is a washable fabric, WASH IT
- If it cannot be wiped or washed, COVER IT
- If it cannot be wiped, washed or covered, REMOVE IT

- ★ Efforts should be concentrated in the bedroom (as we spend most indoor time there).
- ★ Encase mattress, box spring, and pillow in "mite proof" allergen encasements.
- ★ Wash all bedding in hot water (>130°F) to kill the mites.
- Remove all dust collectors (for example, stuffed animals).
- Remove upholstered furniture in favor of leather or wipeable furniture and minimize or wash soft drapery.
- Remove wall-to-wall carpets from the bedroom if possible. Bare vinyl or hardwood floors are best.
- Vacuum carpets and furniture no more than once per week.
- Use a central vacuum or a vacuum with a HEPA filter. If you are allergic, wear a filter mask while dusting, sweeping or vacuuming.
- Remember, it takes over two hours for the dust to settle back down, so if possible clean when the allergic patient is away and don't clean the bedroom at night.
- Measure the indoor humidity and keep it below 55 percent. Do not use vaporizers or humidifiers. You may need a dehumidifier. Use vent fans in bathrooms and when cooking to remove moisture. Repair all water leaks.
- If you have forced hot air heating or central A/C, install a high efficiency media filter in the furnace and air-conditioning unit. Leave the fan on to create a "whole house" air filter that removes particulates. Change the filter at least every three months (with the change of the sea-

### Where To Purchase Mite Proof Mattress and Pillow Covers

Target, Bed, Bath & Beyond, Wal-Mart

National Allergy Supply  
([www.nationalallergysupply.com](http://www.nationalallergysupply.com))  
Allergy Control Products, Inc.  
[www.allergycontrol.com](http://www.allergycontrol.com)

### Other Facts About Dust Mites

Dust mites are the most common cause of allergy from house dust.

There may be as many as 19,000 dust mites in one gram of dust, but usually between 100 to 500 mites live in each gram. (A gram is about the weight of a paper clip.)

## What is a Dust Mite?

- Dust mites are approximately 1/3 mm, sightless, 8-legged arachnids.
- Dust mites are closely related to ticks, scabies, and spiders.
- Mites are photophobic (do not like the light) and very susceptible to drying and therefore live in nests such as mattresses, carpets, sofas and bedding
- In these sites there is ample food source (human skin scales)
- Mites continue to grow deep inside their "nests" in which the microenvironment remains humid.
- In temperate areas where temperature and humidity are highest in mid summer, mite numbers (and allergen) increase rapidly and there is a

peak or season of mite allergen in the Fall and early Winter.

