

ALLERGY AVOIDANCE AND MODIFICATIONS

Dust Mite Allergy

Dust mites feed off the dead skin of humans and animals. They like moderate heat and moderate humidity. These mites are found in mattresses, pillows, comforters, stuffed couches and chairs, carpet and curtains. The following are ways to reduce the number of dust mites in your home.

- Purchase a dehumidifier to keep the humidity in your home below 50%
- Invest in an air purifier with a HEPA filter
- Remove all pets from your bedroom and any carpeted area
- Invest in impermeable covers for your mattress and pillows
- Wash bedding at least every 14 days in hot water, using bleach if possible
- Thick comforters and stuffed animals can be heated in a dryer or placed in the freezer for a few hours
- Remove carpeting, using wood, tile or linoleum as replacements
- Opt for leather, wood or synthetic furniture over stuffed sofas and chairs
- You can apply Permethrin 5%, Tannic Acid spray 3% (not for light colored fabric), or Benzyl Benzoate powder (such as Acarosan) to carpet, upholstery, drapes and bedding

Mold Allergy

Molds can be found both indoors and outdoors. They are often found in shady, damp areas with decaying organic debris as a food source. Molds can be found outdoors, unless it is freezing, and the highest mold counts in summer and fall. The following are ways you can control mold growth outdoors.

- Decrease the amount of ground vegetation (leaves, organic mulch, etc.) close to your house
- Trim back bushes and trees to allow sun to penetrate the area near your house
- Ventilate and drain crawl spaces under house and any nearby damp, low-lying areas

Indoors, mold can often be found in the coils of air conditioning units and refrigerators, bathrooms, laundry rooms, closets, basements, plants, stuffed furniture and shower curtains. The following are ways to minimize mold indoors.

- Keep the humidity inside your home below 50% using a dehumidifier, air conditioning, exhaust fans in bathroom and laundry room, and vent cellars, crawl spaces, and attics
- Use light or humectants in small, unvented areas. Humectants (such as DampRid) absorb moisture, lessening mold growth.
- Clean damp or contaminated areas with fungicides such as bleach or commercial mold remover to reduce symptoms
- Use mold retardant in paint, wallpaper glue, shower curtains, grout, and fiberboard

Animal Allergy

Discovery of an allergy to your dog or cat can create a difficult decision whether to keep your pet or find him or her a new, loving home. Although removing your pet from your home is the only fully effective way to control a pet allergy (may take up to 6 months for the allergen residue to clear), there are some ways to minimize your symptoms.

- Keep all pets out of your bedroom
- Remove carpeting and/or use a high efficiency vacuum
- Use air filtration
- Wash all pets on a regular basis