

# Allergy Guide



## Allergy Treatments

Allergens are particles that cause an allergic reaction. The most common allergens are dust mites, animal dander, pollen, and mold. Over 50 million people in America experience some sort of allergy. Allergies are treatable and easily controlled. Your allergist may recommend any of the following treatments.

- **Avoidance** Avoidance is the process in which you eliminate or decrease the exposure to the substance in which you are allergic to. When you are exposed to less of an allergen, then you will have less of a reaction.

- **Medication** Some medications are able to block the allergy symptoms. This does not necessarily cure the allergy, but it is essential for treatment, especially in those with asthma, eczema, or nasal allergies.
- **Immunotherapy** Immunotherapy is administered by allergist. They take a small amount of the allergen and administer small amounts in an effort to decrease the sensitivity overtime.

Once you have completed allergy testing, and your allergist knows which allergens are causing your symptoms, it is essential to limit your exposure. In some cases, allergens can be eliminated or decreased enough that treatment may not be necessary. If symptoms are still present after eliminating the allergens, then it is important to work with your allergist to formulate a proper treatment plan.

## Allergen Avoidance

- For hard surfaces, wipe
- For washable fabrics, wash
- For things that cannot be washed or wiped, encase them
- If it cannot be washed, wiped, or encased, remove it
- If the indoor air is not dry, then dehumidify



## Dust Allergy

A dust allergy occurs when someone is sensitive to the waste and body fragments of dust mites. Dust mites are small creatures that live in soft materials, such as carpets, blankets, mattresses, pillows, etc. They live near people or other warm-blooded animals and eat the dead skin that is shed every day. They prefer dark, moist environments. Most people have a small reaction to dust mites, while some people do have a true allergic reaction to them. It is responsible for causing nasal symptoms, eye inflammation, eczema, or asthma. In an effort to decrease the exposure to dust mites, you should focus on the bedroom, where dust mites prefer to live.



## Animal Allergens

Mammals, such as cats and dogs produce a type of protein in their skin that can be airborne and cause allergic symptoms. Since they are typically small animals in the home, then remain suspended in the air for a longer period of time. This is even true for non-shedding animals. Animal dander is most commonly found in the space that the animal is present, but can be found in places even where an animal has never been. This occurs when dander has been brought in on clothes of pet owners. Dander is typically very sticky and can last for long periods of time. The one thing to do to get rid of animal dander is to rehome the animal, but in many cases, this is not possible. The next best step is to keep the animal limited to certain areas of the home and to frequently deep clean and bathe the animal.



## Mold Allergies

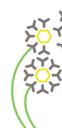
Mold is a fungal organism that grows as a network that can spread, which leads to decomposition. When these networks become large enough, we are able to see them and that is typically when decomposition begins. Mold reproduces by forming spores, which travel through the air. It is typically found in warm, dark, damp locations. Outdoors, they live on grass or on tree bark. Inside, they live in places with high humidity, such as bathrooms or basements.

## Important Steps

1. If you have pets, keep them out of the patient's bedroom at all time.
2. It is essential that you encase pillows, box spring, and mattress in covers to prevent mite allergens from escaping.
3. Be sure to use washable blankets and wash all bedding weekly. This kills live mites and gets rid of the allergen as well. Use hot water.
4. Remove the carpet in the bedrooms and replace it with tile or wood flooring and washable rugs, which can be washed weekly. If carpet must remain in the home, then use a dry carpet- cleaning product to remove mites.
5. Remove all stuffed toys, upholstered furniture, throw pillows, etc. Anything that can be washed weekly can be kept.
6. You may also choose to remove curtains and replace with wipeable blinds.
7. Use diluted bleach to eliminate mold on surfaces such as showers.
8. Allow ventilation in shower and cooking areas.

## To Do List

- Wash sheets, blankets, and pillow cases weekly.
- Encase mattress, box spring, and pillows in allergen-proof covers.
- Wipe surfaces at least weekly with dust-trapping cloth.
- Remove carpet, upholstered furniture, throw pillows, stuffed toys, and curtains.
- Use HEPA air filter and filter on vacuum cleaner.
- Keep humidity between 40-50% at all times.
- Use dust mask during exposures.
- Remove the pet from your home. If this is not possible, then keep it from the bedroom and bathe it twice weekly.



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