

DUST MITE ALLERGY



What is a Dust Mite?

- Small microscopic insect not visible to the unaided eye
- Lives off the flakes of skin that we shed
- Found in ANY fabric: upholstered furniture, carpet, mattresses, pillows, and stuffed animals
- Dust mites require humid environment to survive

Dust Mite Allergen Avoidance

- Dust mite covers, airtight: covers the entire mattress or pillow, not just the top, and can be zipped up
- Made from material with tight enough weave so dust mites can't get in
- Not quilted dust mite cover (dust mites will live in quilting) o Breathable, comfortable covers sold at:
 - *Medical Tree Pharmacy, 6-795 Gardiners Road, 613-887-8733
 - * Protech covers: www.protechallergies.com, toll free 1-833-776-2553
- Cheaper, plastic or vinyl covers also work, but less comfortable to sleep on (use washable/removable mattress pad on top for added comfort)
- Heat kills dust mites: Wash bed linens once/week in hot water (55 degrees C) and in dryer
- Cold kills dust mites: Can put stuffed animals or pillow in freezer (can also put in dryer instead _ washing is best though)
- Dryness kills dust mites: keep relative humidity < 50% (use dehumidifier, air-conditioning helps) optimal is 40% (< 30% is too dry)
- NO carpets (even with vacuuming, carpets retain dust mites)
- Leather/wooden furniture is also best (dust mites can't live in them)
- Vacuum cleaners: vacuuming may stir up the dust mites, use a vacuum with a HEPA filter or Central Vac system

Other

- Acaricides (chemicals that kill dust mites): not yet proven to work
- Room air filter: not beneficial. The dust mite allergen is too heavy to be airborne and thus not effectively filtered

Dr. Ellie Tsai

www.kingstonallergyandasthma.com