

Orange Dental And ENT Care Centre

Snore And Sinus Clinic

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Allergic Rhinitis Prevention

The tendency to develop allergic rhinitis may be an inherited problem. Health professionals do not know how to prevent allergies from being passed on in families.

Evidence suggests that significant exposure to allergens, secondhand smoke, and air pollution can irritate the nose and throat and contribute to developing an allergy.³ Evidence also suggests that receiving food other than breast milk during the first 2 months of life increases the risk of developing atopy.²

Parents who have allergic conditions can take certain measures to reduce the chance that their children will also develop atopy, such as breast-feeding instead of formula feeding for at least 6 months and by keeping their child away from secondhand smoke.

Although you cannot prevent allergic rhinitis, you can take steps to avoid the allergens that cause allergic reactions.

- Avoid substances that other family members are allergic to, which may reduce the risk of developing allergies or of making allergies worse. This applies especially to small children who may be at increased risk of developing allergies later in life.
- If you have a seasonal allergy and you know when exposure to the allergen is likely to occur, some medications (cromolyn sodium and nasal corticosteroids) may help reduce your symptoms if taken before exposure.
- Allergy shots (immunotherapy) may reduce or eliminate your sensitivity to the allergen that causes an allergic reaction

Cleaning

- Damp-mop hard floors (tile or hardwood, for example) once a day.
- Dust and vacuum once or twice a week to remove accumulated reservoirs of allergens. Wiping hard surfaces such as countertops, tables, and other furniture with a dry cloth can remove up to 70% of dust mite and animal dander allergens; using a moist cloth can remove up to 90% of these allergens.¹
- Vacuum the carpets and upholstered furniture to get rid of as much dust as you can.
- Use a vacuum cleaner with a HEPA filter or a special double-thickness bag, which collects dust-mite particles and pollen. Standard paper bag filters may allow the stirred-up allergens to escape back into the room.
- Dusting and vacuuming stirs up dust, making the air more irritating until the dust settles. Wear a mask if you do the cleaning yourself. If possible, try to have someone in your household without allergies do the cleaning.
- Consider wet-vacuum cleaning when possible. This can help remove allergens from carpeting because it actually washes the carpet. Also, consider steam cleaning carpets when possible. In addition to cleaning the carpet, the heat of the steam kills dust mites.

Controlling dust mites

Dust mites are small insects visible only through a microscope. People are allergic to the insects' droppings, not the insects themselves. Allergy to dust mites is a year-round problem.

- Keep the house aired out and dry. Try to keep the moisture level (humidity) below 50%. Dust mites thrive where humidity is greater than 50% but do not do well in dry conditions. This may be difficult in some seasons and some climates. Plants and fish tanks contribute to humidity, so keep these out of the bedroom.
- Dry vacuuming doesn't pick up dust mites. Consider steam cleaning carpets when possible. In addition to cleaning the carpet, the heat of the steam kills dust mites.
- Chemicals that kill dust mites (ascaricides) are available and can be used on carpeting and furniture. However, many experts do not consider them effective enough to be worth the trouble and expense of using them.
- Wash bedding, including pillowcases and mattress covers, in hot water [130 °F (54.4 °C)] every 2 weeks.
- The most effective way to reduce dust-mite allergens is to cover your mattress, box spring, and pillows with allergen -proof covers, and wash them regularly.

Because adults spend one-third of their time and children spend half of their time in their bedrooms, it is important that protective measures be emphasized in this room.

Controlling dust and dust mites in your home

Large amounts of allergens can accumulate in the dust on furniture, floors, and carpeting; on beds and other soft furniture; and on clothing. The allergens found in dust are the main source of exposure in the home.¹ Preventing and eliminating dust may help reduce your allergy and asthma symptoms.

Some steps you can take to control dust in your home are listed below. Many of these measures also help control dust mites.

Air

- Do not use window or attic fans, which draw unfiltered air containing, pollen, mold spores, and other allergens into your home.
- Use air conditioning so you do not have to open windows. This will help reduce the amount of pollen, and mold spores that enter your home.
- Use an air conditioner or air purifier with a special high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter. This can help remove some allergen particles (such as pollen or animal dander) and tobacco smoke from the air in your home.

Furniture, carpets, drapes, and bedding

- Avoid carpet, upholstered furniture, and heavy drapes that collect dust.
- Use furniture made of wood, plastic, leather, or vinyl (including vinyl mattress covers) that can be wiped clean. Avoid furniture upholstered with fabrics, or use covers made from a tight-weave fabric that keeps out dust and mites.
- Remove rugs and wall-to-wall carpeting. Talk with your family about this measure and how this will affect family life. If you cannot or do not want to remove carpeting throughout the home, considering removing it only in the bedroom.
- Use smaller rugs (throw rugs, area rugs) that can be washed to remove dust.
- Replace drapes and blinds, which can accumulate dust with roll-down shades or washable curtains.
- Remove "dust collectors" from bedrooms, such as stuffed toys, wall hangings, books, knickknacks, and artificial flowers.
- Avoid wool blankets and down quilts.

Controlling animal dander and other pet allergens

All warm-blooded pets, such as cats, dogs, birds, and rodents, have dead skin cells (animal dander) and produce urine or stool that can trigger allergy or asthma symptoms. Finding your pet a new home can decrease your exposure to animal allergens. If you cannot part with your pet:

- Keep your pet outside of the house or at least out of your bedroom. For example, when cats are removed from rooms, the allergens in the air decline by 70%. Confine your pet to areas of the home that have hard floors that can be cleaned more easily than carpeted floors.
- Clean birdcages, rodent cages, or areas where pets sleep at least once a week.
- Dust and vacuum frequently. If you can, do this when the person who has an allergy or asthma is not at home. Use a static cloth for dusting, and a vacuum with a high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter, which helps keep dust off carpets and floors and out of the air.
- Keep air registers closed if there is a pet in the house. This will reduce the amount of animal dander circulating in the house. This may only be practical in rooms such as your bedroom where your pet is not allowed. You can also purchase filters that are placed over the air registers.
- Do not allow your pet on carpets or upholstered furniture. Consider replacing furniture that is heavily contaminated by animal dander.
- Wash regularly any rugs, pillows, pet beds, or other items the pet has contact with.
- Wash or brush your pet once a week.

People who are allergic to small rodents, such as mice or gerbils, can sometimes be allergic to a substance in the animal's urine as well as its dander. If you are allergic, have other family members clean the litter box or keep your pets outside your home in a garage or shed.

Consider finding your pet a new home if your symptoms are severe. You will have to think about how important your pets are to you versus how bad your allergy symptoms are. You will also have to consider how happy or well-behaved a pet will be if kept outdoors and away from you.

Even when a pet is removed, it can be many months before the change has a noticeable effect. Heavily contaminated items (clothing or furniture) also may need to be removed.

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Controlling indoor mold

Indoor mold (fungus) is very common in humid areas and in homes that have damp areas, such as basements. Reducing damp areas in homes or limiting exposure to them may help decrease allergy and asthma symptoms.

Some steps you can take to decrease mold or exposure to it include:

- Storing fireplace wood outside the home.
- Cleaning bathtubs, shower stalls, shower curtains, and windowsills at least once a month with a disinfectant or liquid bleach. Use bleach with caution, because it may irritate your nose. If your nose is irritated, your allergy symptoms may become worse.
- Keeping the house aired out and dry. This may be difficult in some seasons and some climates.
- Using an exhaust fan in bathrooms and kitchen to vent excess moisture.
- Using a dehumidifier during humid weather. Try to keep the humidity in the home below 50%. Molds thrive in higher humidity.
- Sealing off or avoiding damp areas, such as crawl spaces, attics, or basements. Use a dehumidifier to control mold growth in these areas. Try to avoid materials that have been stored in these areas.
- Removing carpeting from any concrete floors, especially in the basement.
- Repairing any water-damaged areas from leaking roofs or basements. Also, check the areas under sinks and around other plumbing for leaks. These areas can be prime mold-growing areas.
- Making sure your clothes dryer vents moist air to the outside.
- Inspecting closets for items, such as shoes, that may retain moisture.

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