

---

Learning about...

## DUST MITE ALLERGY

---

### What are dust mites?

Dust mites are tiny animals that you cannot see. They live in pillows, blankets, carpets, and soft materials around the house. They eat dead skin that all people shed each day. For this reason, they are also called house dust mites.

### What is dust mite allergy?

After a dust mite eats, it gives off waste. A dust mite allergy means you are sensitive or allergic to the waste of dust mites. This is a common cause of eye irritation, nose symptoms and asthma.

### How can I control the dust mites around the home?

Dust mites like to live in the dark and need about 50% humidity to live. They like warm, dark places. The best way to reduce dust mite exposure is to focus on the bedroom.

#### In the bedroom:

- The most effective way to reduce dust mite exposure is to cover all mattresses and pillows in zippered allergen barrier covers. Breathable covers made from microfibre or special barriers are more comfortable than those made from vinyl or plastic.
- Wash all blankets and sheets in hot water (at least 70° C) every 2 weeks to kill live mites. You may decide to buy special comforters that have a barrier against allergens. They do not need to be washed often.
- Remove the carpet. Carpets are a source of mites in any room. A floor that can be wiped such as hardwood or vinyl is best. If you keep the carpet, use a dry carpet-cleaning product. Shampooing the carpet can increase dust mite growth.
- Clean the floor, woodwork, walls and ceilings with a damp cloth. Use products such as Endust that make dust stick to the mop or cloth. Try not to use a dry mop or dry duster in the bedroom as this often just makes dust airborne. If there is no carpet, do not use a vacuum cleaner. Vacuums may spread dust. You may find it beneficial to wear a well fitting particle mask while cleaning.