

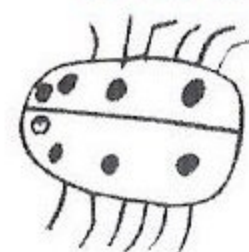


I CAN!

The Children's Asthma and Allergy Network
@ The Children's Medical Institute

HOUSE DUSTMITES

WHAT ARE HOUSE DUST MITES?



House dust mites are microscopic creatures that are found everywhere - in mattresses, pillows, bedsheets, clothes, soft toys, sofas and carpets.

Individuals who suffer from asthma, allergic rhinitis or eczema are commonly sensitized (allergic) to house dust mites allergens. The most common dust mites in Singapore are *Blomia tropicalis* and *Dermatophagoides* spp. However, other species are also present in Singapore. The droppings of these dust mites are the most common triggers of allergy and asthma symptoms.

HOW WILL I KNOW IF I AM ALLERGIC TO DUST MITES ALLERGENS?

As dust mites are everywhere, it is difficult to assess clinically if one is allergic to them. Therefore, the most reliable way to test for allergy is via a skin prick test or blood tests. Please refer to our pamphlet on "What you need to know about allergy tests".

HOW DO I AVOID THEM?

As we spend most of our time in the bedroom, it is most important to reduce the amount of dust mites there. Complete avoidance of dust mites is very impossible but there are measures you can institute to decrease the amount of dust mites in your home to below sensitizing levels.

SIMPLE BUT VERY EFFECTIVE MEASURES

- Wash bedsheets and pillowcases in hot water (60°C) fortnightly.
- Avoid beddings, such as pillows and comforters that are made of natural materials (example: feathers) and replace them with items made from synthetic fibres.
- Remove stuffed toys and thick heavy curtains in the bedroom that can trap dust.
- Damp dusting should be used to clean surfaces - avoid feather dusters!
- Air-conditioners, if used, should be cleaned regularly.
- Avoid using carpets in the room.

NB: The above measures when properly used can reduce dust mite allergy levels significantly.

THERE ARE ADDITIONAL MEASURES THAT MAY REDUCE DUST MITES ALLERGY LEVEL BUT AT A SIGNIFICANT COST

- Use of mite-proof mattress and pillow cover together with special blanket.
- Use of HEPA (high-efficiency particulate) filter vacuum cleaners, air filters.

