



bowtieallergy

Board-certified Specialist

DUST MITES ALLERGY

Disgustingly, dust mites are microscopic insects that live in your mattress, pillow, bedding and carpet. Ever notice how your mattress gains weight as it ages? Ever notice how new mattress is almost weightless compared to a well-used mattress? Dust mites poop. Yep; that's what people are most commonly allergic to the world over (and it's not even the dust mites, themselves). Gross.

Fortunately, if you have dust mites allergy, there are now several things you can do to limit your exposure. Most importantly and first, obtaining and using zippered mattress and separate pillow encasements will significantly reduce your exposure to dust mites. Encasements come in two "flavors:" plastic (hot, like sleeping on a balloon, cheap, just as efficacious as the more expensive variety); and 2, finely woven fabric (breathable but expensive). Whatever you do with them, once they go on the mattress/pillow, they never come off. You get a new encasement every time you get a new mattress/pillow from now on. Simple. Don't be silly and wash your encasement; the plastic ones will melt in the dryer, and the finely woven ones will pull, develop microscopic holes, and the mites will come right through. Fortunately though, you don't need to purchase a new mattress and pillow to start out. Just encase what you have, and you'll be off to a strong start.

Second, stuffed animals will need to start their guard on the nightstand and they should not be permitted to sleep in the bed with you (or with your affected child). They can protect against the monsters even more effectively without being in your child's arms as they sleep. You need not get rid of the stuffed animal, and your affected child can even play with it while they're awake. They just shouldn't sleep with it. What is more, you can help the stuffed animal in question get a "winter coat" by spending a night in the freezer (cold kills dust mites). Once it's out of the freezer, bypass the washer and put the stuffed animal straight into the dryer (it can get a "tan;" heat kills dust mites too).

Third, dust mites love moisture, so don't shampoo or steam-vac your carpet more than once a year if you can handle it. Also, humidifiers only put moisture in the room, so they're generally a no-no as well. That stated, running a HEPA-filtered vacuum once a week will help reduce the dust mites load in your carpet. Be sure to run the vacuum when the affected patient isn't home and won't be home for at least 20 minutes to let the dust mites settle out of the air. If you're unlucky enough to be the vacuumer in your home, wear a painter's mask while you vacuum and take whatever medicine your Bowtie Allergist recommended to you.

Fourth (and usually unnecessary if you do the above and take your medicine), ask your Bowtie Allergist about air filters. In general, don't waste your money. To learn more about your dust mites allergy, call Bowtie Allergy Specialists for an appointment. Remember that knowledge alone empowers you to needing fewer visits with your doctors.