

CLEANING TIPS

FOR ASTHMA & ALLERGIES



Your GP/pharmacist can help identify what you are allergic to and show you how to avoid your allergy triggers.

SPRING CLEANING

Allergy occurs when a person's immune system reacts to substances in the environment that do not bother most people. These substances are known as allergens and are found all around us.

All sorts of asthma and allergy triggers can accumulate in your home, especially house dust mites and mould.

Even though complete allergen avoidance will not cure asthma, reduced exposure to your allergen triggers may lead to improved control of your asthma and reduce your need for medication.

HOUSE DUST MITES & MOULD – COMMON TRIGGERS IN THE HOME

House dust mites are the most common allergic trigger for asthma in Australia. These microscopic creatures feed off skin scales, and thrive in temperate and humid climates such as coastal areas.

Whereas exposure to indoor and outdoor areas that are damp and have mould may also trigger asthma symptoms in some people. The spring-cleaning tips below can help reduce the impact of these common triggers on you and your family.

REDUCING DUST MITES IN THE HOME

- Wash sheets and pillowcases weekly in water hotter than 55°C.
- Remove soft toys from bedrooms, or wash weekly in water hotter than 55°C.
- Open curtains and air bedding in the sunshine and give them a regular clean.
- Consider venetian blinds or flat blinds, which are easier to clean than heavy curtains. External shutters are another option.
- Cover mattresses, quilts and pillows with dust mite-resistant encasings.
- Use a damp or electrostatic cloth to dust hard surfaces (including floors).
- Ask someone else to do the vacuuming, as this increases allergens in the air for up to 20 minutes. Also consider using a vacuum cleaner with an asthma and allergy sensitive HEPA filter.
- Keep rooms dry and well ventilated.
- Clear out the clutter.
- Consider house dust mite measures when building or renovating.

MOULD AVOIDANCE MEASURES

- Remove visible mould with bleach or other mould reduction cleaners - if you are sensitive to strong odours, wear a mask or ask someone else to do this for you.
- Using high-efficiency air filters – these may be integrated in air-conditioning, heat-recovery ventilation systems, or in stand-alone air purifiers.
- Ensure adequate natural ventilation including the use of extractor fans.
- Seal leaks in bathrooms and roofs.
- Clear overflowing gutters and blocked underfloor vents.
- Remove indoor pot plants (which promote mould growth).
- Drying or removing wet carpets.
- Treating rising damp as soon as it is detected.
- Avoiding the use of organic mulches, and compost heaps.