

A Step By Step Guide To Dust Mite Control In Your Home



What Are House Dust Mites?



The Dust Mite is a microscopic creature, related to spiders and ticks that lives primarily in mattresses, pillows, duvets, carpets and soft furnishings. Mites do not live on people, but they live near them, feeding off shed skin scales. Most dust mites are found in the bedroom, particularly the mattress, which provides the best conditions of warmth, humidity, darkness and food for their growth. A mattress can contain two million or more Dust Mites. Each female lays up to 60 eggs with a new generation produced every three weeks. During the 80 day lifetime of a Dust Mite it produces approximately one thousand faeces.

Mites are too large to be inhaled, but it is their faeces and the parts of the dead mite skeletons which are much smaller and easily disturbed which are inhaled. So disturbing a bed, even by simply turning over in the night, walking on carpets and disturbing other soft materials where mites live can cause shortness of breath, runny nose, sore watery eyes, sneezing and other allergy symptoms.

If you are just concerned about hygiene and do not have any illness that will be aggravated by Dust Mites then this information is not essential reading. You just need to have your mattress cleaned two or three times a year by The Mattress Doctor and spray it once a week with our Mattress Hygiene Spray to maintain its' hygienic status.

If you or anyone in your home suffers from Asthma or any other respiratory or skin disorder, then the following information will be extremely helpful and there is further information available to you through the many links on our web site at www.mattressdoctor.net. The more severe your allergic reactions, the closer you should follow these guidelines.

Studies have shown that the bedrooms are the most important rooms to deal with as this is where the most time is spent and where dust levels are highest. However, if you suffer from acute conditions, the same principles apply throughout the home.

MATTRESS CLEANING



The Mattress is the most important item in the home to keep clean and free of Dust Mites. How often you should call in The Mattress Doctor to have your Mattresses cleaned will depend upon the severity of the illness. For those with severe allergic reactions we recommend cleaning as often as once every two or three months. You can help to judge this by just being aware of when allergic reactions start to become more frequent; that is the time to call in The Mattress Doctor.

BLANKETS, DUVETS & PILLOWS



Encase mattresses, duvets and pillows in micropore, allergen proof covers to help prevent mite allergens escaping. Do however please note that it is essential to follow the manufacturers recommendations regarding cleaning, which normally require that these are removed and washed at high temperatures once a week and the mattress is well aired whilst washing takes place. If you do not follow these instructions, you may make matters worse. We have tested many mattresses where washing instructions have not been complied with and the contamination in the mattress is considerably worse than in a mattress without these covers. If you are not able to take them off and wash them regularly, then avoid them.

Avoid using feather pillows and duvets as they are difficult to wash. Man made fibre pillows and duvets can be washed at 60 degrees centigrade or cold washed with an anti dust mite wash additive.

Only use washable blankets and wash all bedding in hot water at least every two weeks. This kills mites and washes out their allergens. If bedding cannot be hot washed at a minimum of 60 degrees centigrade, use a dust mite wash additive. The Mattress Doctor can also treat your duvet and pillows for you when you have your mattresses cleaned.

Lightly spray all bedding once a week with The Mattress Doctor Mattress Hygiene Spray.

CUSHIONS, SOFT FURNISHINGS & SOFT TOYS



Remove cushions and other soft furnishings. Where this is not possible, have these treated by The Mattress Doctor when you have your mattresses cleaned. Do not keep too many soft toys in the room and put them in the freezer for about six hours every few weeks to kill the mites and then wash them.

Lightly spray all carpets and rugs once a week with The Mattress Doctor Mattress Hygiene Spray but test for colour fastness first.

CARPETS & RUGS



Some allergy specialists still recommend removing these from the room. Unless they are animal rugs or deep pile shag carpets, this is not necessary. In fact recent clinical studies have proven that uncarpeted floors actually increase sensitisation as dust is not trapped as it is in a carpet, and therefore becomes airborne far more easily.

Instead, vacuum the carpets using a HEPA filtered vacuum cleaner, and get The Mattress Doctor to treat the carpets when you have your mattresses cleaned.

Do not shampoo carpets as residual moisture will encourage mite growth. Instead have them dry cleaned. There are several companies that offer an in-home, chemical free, dry cleaning service.

Lightly spray all carpets and rugs once a week with The Mattress Doctor Mattress Hygiene Spray but test for colour fastness first.

CURTAINS & VENETIAN BLINDS



Remove heavy curtains. If you have lightweight curtains, vacuum these once a week with a HEPA filtered vacuum cleaner and spray with The Mattress Doctor Mattress Hygiene Spray but test for colour fastness first.

If you have Venetian blinds, they should be wiped clean every other day with a damp cloth. Alternatively replace curtains or Venetian Blinds with flat, wipeable blinds.

PREVENT BUILD UP OF DUST



The more dust that is allowed to accumulate, the more likely it is there will be allergic reactions. Reduce the number of items on which dust can build-up, especially if they are difficult to clean. Where possible, keep ornaments, books, clothes and anything that will collect dust in display cabinets, drawers or cupboards. Regularly clean surfaces/objects where dust collects using a damp cloth (dry cloths will not pick up all of the dust and will let a lot of it back into the air).

REDUCE DAMPNESS IN THE HOME

Dust Mites love a warm, damp environment and reproduce at a very high rate when these conditions are present. Follow these guidelines to reduce the levels of humidity in your home:

- Open windows or vents in kitchens and bathrooms during and after cooking, washing and bathing. To keep the dampness from spreading to the rest of the house keep doors to these rooms closed.
- Avoid drying clothes indoors, especially in the bedroom and living rooms, unless using driers which are vented outdoors.
- If you have to dry clothes indoors then open a window and close the door to the room where the damp clothes are.
- Leave the bed open to air before remaking the bed and open windows or vents in the bedrooms
- In extreme cases, consider installing a de-humidifier.



AIR QUALITY



The cleaner the air in a home, the less likely that allergic reactions will occur. So you may also want to consider installing an air filtration unit, particularly in the bedroom and living room. Small, portable units are available which require little or no maintenance and are relatively inexpensive.

IF YOU KEEP PETS



It's best not to, but if you must keep pets:

- Keep them out of the bedroom. This will prevent build up of dander in the room.
- Wash the pet twice weekly, preferably outdoors.
- Treat the pet's basket and bedding as you will your own bedding.

Lightly spray all items once a week with The Mattress Doctor Mattress Hygiene Spray

ABOUT THE MATTRESS DOCTOR®



The Mattress Doctor operates the world's leading mattress cleaning service. We currently have highly trained operators who can assist you in the following countries:

United Kingdom
Ireland
Canada
United States of America
Cyprus
Norway
South Africa.

In order to contact an operator in your country, or if you are looking for a career as a Mattress Doctor anywhere in the world, please visit our web site at www.mattressdoctor.net.