

Avoidance Tips

POLLEN



- Avoid, if you can, going outside on a day when the pollen count is high (eg, a dry, windy day). Pollen is at its highest levels in late evening and early morning.
- Check the weather network and newspaper for forecasts on local pollen counts.
- Keep windows closed, and use air conditioners when possible.
- Air conditioning will decrease indoor pollen counts because it recirculates indoor air instead of outside air, which carries pollen.
- Have someone kill weeds by cutting them or using weed killers.
- Avoid plants related to ragweed, including zinnias, chrysanthemums, marigolds, dahlias, and sunflowers.
- Use HEPA (High Efficiency Particulate Arrester) filters in the home (eg, HEPA air filters, HEPA vacuum cleaner filters). These filters are designed to absorb most particles floating in the air, or to keep vacuumed dust from escaping from the vacuum cleaner back into the air.

MOLD



- Reduction of excess dampness in the house is the prime goal in controlling mold.
- Reduce the amount of house dust in your home (house dust carries mold).
- Wash window ledges and shower stalls with chlorine bleach or Lysol at least once every 3 months.
- Use mold-resistant paints to cover walls on unfinished basements.
- Keep houseplants to a minimum or use solutions (available at nurseries) that you can mix with your potting soil to inhibit mold growth.
- Clean furnace filters, air conditioners, dehumidifiers, and vaporizers frequently to prevent mold build-up.
- Wallpaper is a prime location for mold, especially in the bathroom. If you are newly papering your walls, add borax or boric acid to the paste to slow mold growth.
- Dry damp clothes promptly.
- Vent dryers to the outside to prevent build-up of moisture.
- Spread out towels and the shower curtain as often as possible so that they will dry promptly.
- Discard damp piles of papers, carpeting, and old furniture.
- Replace old pillows and bedding.
- Check attics and crawl spaces for mold and moisture.

DUST MITES



- Keep bedrooms clean. You may spend more than a third of your life in the bedroom, so focus on efforts to improve your environment. Try using wooden or linoleum flooring and keep your bed away from air vents. Everything in the room should be washable, including bedding, rugs, and foam mattresses. Use pillows made of Dacron or foam rather than using pillows made from feathers. Vacuum mattresses and enclose them in a protective dust mite cover. Use synthetic blankets.
- Avoid being present during house cleaning if possible, or wear an appropriate mask if it is necessary for you to clean the house. Clean rooms with a damp dust cloth twice weekly.
- Avoid overstuffed furniture. If you have it, then do not sit on it.
- Eliminate dust catchers and avoid clutter.
- Replace old carpets and rugs if possible. If you intend to keep your carpet or if it is new, you can reduce allergens in your carpets by applying a solution that helps to minimize dust formation in the carpeting.
- Use only washable window curtains made of cotton or polyester. Venetian blinds are not recommended because of their dust-catching ability.
- Furnaces should be serviced regularly by having ducts cleaned and filters replaced.
- Use HEPA air filters and vacuum cleaners.
- Replace old pillows and bedding.
- Check attics and crawl spaces for mold and moisture.

ANIMALS



- Never let pets into your bedroom.
- Keep pets outside as much as possible, and prevent allergy sufferers from bathing pets.
- Professional cleaning of carpets and air ducts is usually required to remove animal dander, even after pets have been removed from the home.
- If you are going to visit someone else's home where there is a pet, consider taking nonsedating antihistamines (as recommended by your doctor) before visiting.
- Live animals are not the only source of allergies. Clothing made of cashmere, animal hair, or mohair can trigger an allergic reaction. The same is true for animal hair-stuffed chairs, sofas, and toys, and down-stuffed pillows. Use Dacron-filled pillows and comforters instead of foam rubber, which encourages mold growth.