

Controlling Allergens: In the Home



Even a clean home can be full of allergens. So take a moment to see what you can do to cut down on allergens in each room of your home.

- Buy an air purifier with a HEPA filter. Look online or in consumer magazines for recommendations. Don't overuse vaporizers and humidifiers. They encourage mold and dust-mite growth.
- Use shades or vertical blinds instead of horizontal blinds, which collect dust. Replace drapes with curtains that can be washed regularly.
- Enclose mattresses, box springs, and pillows in allergy-proof casings. Bedding (sheets, mattress covers, pillowcases) should be washed weekly in hot water. Use washable blankets and quilts. Don't use feather pillows, down comforters, and wool blankets.
- Prevent dust-catching clutter. Have enclosed places to keep books, toys, and clothes. Keep closet doors closed.
- Use washable throw rugs wherever possible. Or have bare floors.
- Put filters over forced-air heating vents. Change the filters regularly.
- Keep your car clean. Vacuum the seats and carpets regularly.
- If you have air conditioning, use it instead of opening the windows in your car and home. Air conditioning filters and dehumidifies air. It reduces pollens getting into your car and home from open windows.
- Keep rain gutters clean. Remove leaves and debris that can grow mold.
- Check stored food for spoilage and mold growth. Clean up spills right away.
- Don't let wet clothing sit and grow mold. And don't hang clothes outside to dry where they can collect airborne pollen. Dry clothing right away in a clothes dryer that's vented to the outside.
- Install a fan to keep the bathroom well-ventilated.
- Keep pets out of your bedroom. Keep them off upholstered furniture.
- Control pests such as cockroaches and mice. Close up areas of the home where pests can enter. Don't leave open food out in the kitchen. Use bait or traps to kill pests. Get professional pest control help if the problem doesn't go away.
- Try to stay away from cigarette smoke and perfume. They are not allergens. But they can make your allergy symptoms worse. They irritate your eyes, nose, throat, and lungs.

Protect against pollen

Yard work, pulling weeds, and other outdoor activities increase your exposure to pollen. If these activities bother you, wear a filter mask when the pollen counts are high. When you're done, bathe, wash your hair, and change your clothes.

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