

HOUSE DUST MITE AVOIDANCE

Bedding

- Mattress, pillow and quilts can be covered with dust mite resistant covers.
- The covers must be washed every 2 months.
- If covers are not available, wash blankets and non-encased washable doonas at least every 2 months in hot water (>55°C).
- Wash sheets and pillowcases weekly in hot water (>55°C).
(This will kill mites and wash away the allergen they produce)

- Alternatively, if washing in cold water, use a commercial product containing essential oils such as tea tree or eucalyptus oil, formulated to kill dust mites.
- If washing normally, hot tumble-drying of washed items for 10 minutes after they are dry will kill mites.
- Air doonas and pillows in sunlight for a few hours each week.
- Remove sheepskin or woolen underlays.
- Soft toys should be washed weekly using the method described for sheets. Freezing soft toys overnight will kill mites but won't remove allergen.
- Dry cleaning is not as effective, as it will kill house dust mites but not remove the allergen they produce.
- Avoid feather pillows

Other measures

- Ensure there is good ventilation throughout your house to avoid moist air built up, which occurs with cooking, bathing & showering.
- Use a damp duster or electrostatic cloths to clean hard surfaces (including hard floors) weekly.
- Carpets can contain large amounts of house dust mite and animal allergens which cannot be completely removed by vacuuming.
- Vacuum carpets weekly. Vacuuming increases the amount of house dust mite allergen in the air for up to 20 minutes.
- HEPA (high efficiency particulate air) filter vacuum cleaners may remove more allergen than other vacuum cleaners.
- Windows – venetian blinds or flat blinds are easier to clean.
- Washable curtains or external shutters are other options.

It is important to note that:

A combination of bedding covers, washing and reduction of reservoirs will reduce mite allergen levels by 90 per cent.

House dust mite avoidance measures require an ongoing commitment.