



Health Facts *for you*

UW HEALTH - ONLINE HEALTH FACT

Dust Mite Allergy

House dust contains a mixture of tiny pieces of fabric, dander, plant matter, and creatures so small that they are not visible to the human eye. These tiny creatures are called "house dust mites". Dust mites are present in all homes and live in bedding, upholstered furniture, carpet, and stuffed toys. They thrive in hot, humid places (greater than 50% humidity), and feed on the dead skin that falls off the human body, as well as other organic matter. Mite proteins are a very strong allergen (something allergic). If these proteins are inhaled or come in contact with the skin of a person who is allergic, they may cause symptoms such as runny nose, itchy eyes, cough, wheezing, and/or dry, itchy skin.

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Dust Mite Control

The best way to control reactions to dust mites is to decrease exposure. To avoid them is difficult unless one moves to a dry climate. Control is most needed for the bedroom where people spend much of their time.

Steps to control dust mites

- Enclose mattresses, box springs, and pillows in zippered dust mite proof covers.
- Wash sheets and cases weekly in hot water (130°), and dry in a hot dryer.
- Wash blankets and stuffed toys twice monthly in hot water and dry in a hot dryer.
- Keep the humidity level in the home less than 50%. Use a dehumidifier or air conditioner, if needed. Do not use humidifiers or vaporizers unless indoor humidity is less than 20-30%. When using one, change the water often to avoid mold growth.
- Wood or vinyl floors are preferred to carpet. If carpet is present, vacuum weekly when the dust mite allergic person is not in the room.
- Vacuum using a double thickness filter bag.
- Buy stuffed toys for children that can be washed by machine.
- Limit clutter in the room. Remove most stuffed toys from the child's bed.
- Wear a mask while you vacuum if you are allergic to dust mites.

Dust Mites Facts

- Dust mites live where people spend most of their time - in bed or in a plush chair.
- Dust mites need to feed to survive.
- Dust mites thrive in hot, humid places.
- Dust mites do not live in air ducts in homes. Duct cleaning will not reduce exposure to dust mites. It is not helpful to install HEPA filters on your air conditioner or heater vents for dust mite control.
- Cleaning the home will reduce "dust"; though will not change the source of the dust mite protein.
- Weekly dusting with a damp cloth is advised.
- Blinds are better on windows than are curtains, and should be dusted weekly using a damp cloth.
- Freezing stuffed toys will kill the dust mites but will not remove the dust mite protein (the source of the problem). These toys still need to be washed in hot water and dried in a hot dryer to remove the protein.

- Chemicals and sprays are not needed, and will not have a lasting effect on the number of dust mites.

Protective covers for pillows or mattresses are found at many local stores.

- Kohls Department Store
- Target
- Bed, Bath and Beyond
- Linens n' Things
- Shopko

You may order allergy products on line at:

<http://www.allergycontrol.com/>
<http://www.allergystore.com/>
<http://www.natlallergy.com/>
<http://www.allergybuyersclub.com/>
<http://www.a1allergy.com/>
<http://www.allergy-products.net/>

More information about dust mites may be found on-line at:


<http://www.aafa.org/display.cfm?id=9&sub=22&cont=315>
<http://www.nationaljewish.org/medfacts/mites.html>
http://www.drgreene.com/21_1262.html
<http://www.niehs.nih.gov/airborne/prevent/mites.html>
<http://www.acaai.org/public/advice/dust.htm>

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 **DISCOVERY KIDS**

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worm world
roach world


Roach Removal Report

- A Day in the Life
- Roach Removal
- Roach Facts
- Scrapbook
- Roach Quiz
- Glossary

Privacy Policy

Roaches can't help the fact that, to most humans, they are unwanted company. It's funny, though, how these pesky insects can often make a grown man or woman scream, tremble and run for cover faster than you can say, "Where's the bug spray?"



But that's just the way it is.

However, I've done a lot of investigative work, and if you want to get rid of roaches in your house, we can help.

Read on and find out how.



Step 1: Cut down on their food supply

You will leave less food for the roaches if you:

- Vacuum or sweep the floor after every meal.
- Wash dishes in soapy, hot water to eliminate all traces of grease.
- Keep trash in a tightly closed container.
- Keep compost as far from the house as possible. Cover each new "deposit" with a fresh layer of sand or soil.
- Store unused portions of chips, cereal, cookies, flour,

sugar, rice, etc. in tightly sealed plastic containers or large glass jars with screw-on lids.

- After a pet has eaten, remove their food bowl and sweep the floor.
- Don't walk around the house while eating. Try to keep all your crumbs in one room (less cleaning for you).
- Don't forget to clean crumbs from under appliances daily.



Step 2: Make it hard for them to hide

If they can't hide, you can get them. So:

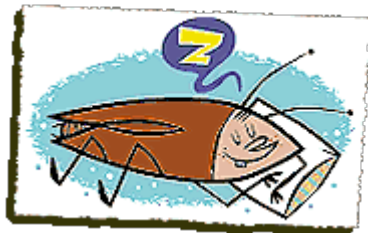
- Move woodpiles away from outside walls.
- Take your recycling out promptly; avoid letting old food cans, stacks of newspapers or magazines pile up.
- There are a wide variety of products available to help get rid of roaches. However, these products should only be used by adults.



Step 3: Dry Up Their Water Supply

Like humans, roaches can go much longer without food than without water. To keep roaches away, keep them thirsty.

- Fix dripping faucets.
- Pour some Lysol into toilets at night to make the water undrinkable.
- Don't over water house plants. Soggy soil is a delicious cockroach cocktail.



Step Four: Keep Them

Out!

To prevent roaches from migrating from your neighbor's place to yours, seal up common roach entryways.

- Fill holes where pipes disappear into walls with steel wool or caulk.
- Pour a little Lysol down your drains nightly to discourage roaches from crawling up into your sinks.
- Keep sink plugs over drains.

GOOD LUCK!!



Grass Pollen Allergy

Grass pollen allergy can be difficult to prevent because it is regional as well as seasonal. Since pollen levels can be affected by temperature, time of day, and precipitation, it is also more difficult to use avoidance as a prevention method. Although grass pollen allergy is perceived to be extremely common, of the 1,200 species of grass in North America, only a small percentage actually causes allergies.

Grass Pollen Allergy: An Overview

As with tree pollen (see [Tree Pollen Allergy](#)), grass pollen is both regional and seasonal. In addition, grass pollen levels can be affected by temperature, time of day, and rain.

Types of Grass That Cause Grass Pollen Allergy

Of the 1,200 species of grass that grow in North America, only a small percentage of these cause [allergies](#). The most common grasses that can cause a grass [pollen allergy](#) are:

- Bermuda grass
- Johnson grass
- Kentucky bluegrass
- Orchard grass
- Sweet vernal grass
- Timothy grass.

Preventive Strategies for Grass Pollen Allergy

Some preventive strategies for grass pollen allergy include the following:

- If you have a grass lawn, have someone else do the mowing. If you must mow the lawn yourself, wear a mask.
- Keep grass cut short.
- Choose ground covers that don't produce much pollen, such as Irish moss, bunch, and dichondra.
- Avoid the outdoors between 5:00 and 10:00 a.m. Save outside activities for late afternoon or after a heavy rain, when pollen levels are lower.
- Keep windows in your home and car closed to lower exposure to pollen. To keep cool, use air conditioners, and avoid using window and attic fans.
- Be aware that pollen can also be transported indoors on people and pets.
- Dry your clothes in an automatic dryer rather than hanging them outside. Otherwise, pollen can collect on clothing and be carried indoors.

POLLEN

Pollen is the fine powder produced by flowers, trees, grass, and weeds. Its role is to fertilize plants and help them reproduce. Pollen is the most common cause of hay fever.

The onset of allergy symptoms often depends on the pollen season. This varies from one region of the country to the next, but the pattern usually goes like this:

Spring

Mostly tree pollen, especially elm, maple, birch, poplar, ash, oak, walnut, sycamore, and cypress.

Spring to fall

Grass pollen.

Late summer

Weed pollen, especially ragweed and its relatives (chrysanthemums, daisies).



How to Guard against Pollen

It is impossible to avoid pollen entirely, but you can reduce your child's contact with it.

- Keep track of when the pollen that affects your child is at high levels in your area.

The pollen count, sometimes given with weather forecasts, can be useful. It measures the amount of pollen in the air at a particular time. The higher the count, the more pollen in the air.

- Keep your child indoors while mowing lawns or raking up garden trash, and try to avoid outdoor activities during peak pollen times.
- Keep plants out of your child's room.
- Keep windows closed, especially in the bedroom.
- Use an air conditioner.
- If your car is equipped with an air conditioner, use it. Keep the windows closed.
- Do not dry your child's clothes or sheets outdoors.

Airborne pollen is usually at its highest on warm, dry, breezy days. Highest concentrations are usually early in the morning and late in the evening.

If children who are sensitive to pollen have been exposed heavily, have them shower or take a bath and wash their hair as soon as possible. If you cannot wash their clothes immediately, store them away from the children's bedrooms.

HAY FEVER

Hay fever affects the inner lining of the nose and its passages. It has nothing to do with hay or fever, but is brought on by allergy to pollen, dust, or mold.

- Depending on the allergen, hay fever can occur all year or only in certain seasons.
- About 30 percent of children who get hay fever outgrow it.

The Symptoms

When the pollen or other allergen enters the nose, it may cause an allergic reaction. The inner lining of the nose becomes inflamed and swollen. This may result in:

- Nasal congestion.
- Sneezing and itching.
- Runny nose and postnasal drip.
- Watery, itchy eyes.

If the symptoms are not treated, they can sometimes lead to complications such as loss of the sense of taste and smell, and an increased risk of bacterial or viral infection of the ear, nose, throat, and sinuses.



Hay fever symptoms can be made worse by changes in temperature, humidity, or weather, or by exposure to irritants such as cigarette smoke or heavy perfume.

Prevention

- If possible, avoid contact with whatever causes the hay fever. If the allergen is unavoidable, such as pollen, focus on eliminating as much of it as you can from rooms where your child spends the most time.

Medication

Medications commonly prescribed to reduce or prevent the symptoms of hay fever include:

- **Antihistamines** help reduce the histamine produced by the allergic reaction. They can help reduce sneezing, runny nose, and itching. They may make your child sleepy, but there are newer antihistamines your doctor may be able to prescribe that do not cause drowsiness.
- **Decongestants and anti-inflammatories** shrink swollen membranes in the nose and make it easier to breathe.

Talk to your doctor about which medication is best for your child.

Do not give any medication for more than a week without checking with your child's doctor. Do not use decongestant nose sprays for more than three days at a time without the doctor's advice.

PETS

Many allergy-prone children become allergic to pets, often after they have been exposed for some time. Once they are allergic to one type of animal, they may develop sensitivity to other types.

Specific substances that may bring on the allergy include:

- Pet saliva.
- Fur and feathers.
- Dander (scaly particles like dandruff on animals and birds).
- Pollen and mold spores carried on the animal's fur.
- Fleas and flea bites.



About two million people in America have some allergic symptoms when they are exposed to cats. Allergy to dogs is less common.

How to Guard against Allergies to Pets

If your child is allergic to pets, the best solution is to avoid them. If you do not have a dog, cat, or bird now, it might be wise not to get one. Keep your child away from other people's furry animals.

If a furry pet is already part of the family, here are some tips.

- Keep the pet outside as much as possible.
- Keep indoor pets out of the bedroom.
- Wash hands thoroughly after contact with pets.
- Wash the pet at least once a week.
- Do not let the pet travel in the same car as your child.
- Vacuum carpets regularly to remove pet hair and fleas.
- Use a room air filter to remove animal dander.
- Children who are allergic to caged birds should also avoid pillows, cushions, or sleeping bags that are stuffed with feathers.