

Jamison: Patient Education and Wellness

HANDOUT 20.3: REDUCING AIRBORNE ALLERGY

- ☐ Identify personal risk areas. Use a diary with a symptom checklist to ascertain if you develop eye, nose or chest irritation:
 - ☐ in a room where carpets are being/have just been vacuumed
 - ☐ when or after making a bed
 - ☐ when exposed to animals or rooms where animals are permitted
 - ☐ consistently in each spring or summer or autumn
 - ☐ when in the basement or a damp room
- ☐ Minimize airborne allergens in high-risk areas through:
 - ☐ household strategies:
 - removing carpet
 - using filter or water reservoir vacuum cleaners
 - covering mattress, doona and pillows with allergen-impermeable covers
 - removing woollen blankets, feather pillows
 - washing bedding regularly at 60°C
 - damp dust
 - wear a mask when house cleaning, gardening, cutting grass
 - banning pets from the house.
 - avoiding cigarette smoke
 - ☐ avoiding pollens by:
 - removing dried flowers or potpourri from the house
 - closing windows facing pollen-bearing winds
 - avoiding contact with animal feed (hay, chaff, oats)
 - removing dense shrubs likely to trap pollen from the vicinity of bedroom windows
 - not hanging sheets out to dry on pollen days
 - ☐ reducing dust or house mites by:
 - having hard floors rather than carpets. Floors can be wiped with a wet mop.
 - wet and steam cleaning every 3 weeks
 - opening windows when vacuuming.
 - vacuuming and damp dust the bedroom twice a week
 - furnishing with wooden, vinyl or leather furniture
 - using plastic covers over feather pillows and mattresses. Doonas and quilts should be replaced by freshly washed acrylic or cotton air blankets
 - washing in hot water. Although washing removes all soluble allergens, only water at temperatures in excess of 55°C kills live mites. Water at 55°C is too hot for hand washing

- dry cleaning. This kills mites but does not remove or denature all mite allergens.
 - avoiding heavy linen curtains
 - treating heavy curtains and carpets with a miticide/tannin acid mixture
 - maintaining humidity of less than 50%. This requires two air changes per hour, ventilating moisture to the outside. Air filtration and air-conditioning have minimal or no effect
- ☐ reducing moulds by:
- ensuring adequate ventilation
 - avoiding air conditioners and humidifiers, a source of mould
 - removing all traces of mould from bathrooms, carpets, rugs
 - fixing damp problems in the house
 - removing dead leaves and compost from the garden

See

Allergy free home <http://www.webmd.com/video/allergy-free-home>

Spring cleaning to reduce allergens <http://www.webmd.com/video/spring-clean-allergies>

Toxic moulds <http://www.webmd.com/video/impact-of-household-mold>