



## Allergen Avoidance Measure

Adapted from *"The Allergy Report"*  
American Academy of Allergy, Asthma, & Immunology

### Common Indoor Allergen Sources

- Mattress, sheets, and box spring
- Upholstered furniture
- Pets / Animals
- Water damage
- Carpeting
- Moldy air conditioners, refrigerators, humidifiers, dehumidifiers
- Kitchen or bathrooms without vents or windows
- Laundry room without a vented dryer
- Crawl spaces
- Damp basements

### Reducing Pollen Exposure

- Keep windows and doors closed.
- Avoid using window or attic fans that draw in outside air.
- Use air conditioning.
- Refrain from outside activities, if possible, during times of high pollen counts (if sensitive).
  - Note peak pollination occurs at different times of the day for different pollens (i.e., ragweed in the late morning, grasses in the afternoon).
- Shower or bathe, and change clothes, after outdoor activity.
- Dry clothes in the dryer, not outside.

### Reducing Fungal (Mold) Exposure

#### **Outdoor Exposure**

- Avoid walking through uncut fields as well as freshly cut lawn
- Do not work with compost or dry soil
- Do not rake leaves.
- Keep windows and doors closed.
- Avoid using window or attic fans that draw in outside air

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- Use air conditioning.

## **Indoor Exposures**

- Clean moldy surfaces.
- Wash swamp coolers.
- Fix all water damage.
- Use air conditioning and dehumidifier to reduce indoor humidity to < 50%, if possible.

## **Avoiding House Dust Mite Allergens**

### **Essential Actions**

- Encase mattress, pillows, and box spring in an allergen-impermeable cover.
- Wash bedding weekly in hot water ( $\geq 130^{\circ}\text{F}$ ).
- Reduce indoor humidity to, 50%, if possible.
- Remove stuffed toys from the bedroom

### **Desirable Actions**

- Remove carpets from the bedroom and carpets laid on concrete from any room.
- Minimize upholstered furniture.
- HEPA-filters are the most efficient.

## **Reduce Exposure to Animal Allergens**

- Remove animals from the home.
- If unable to remove then:
  - Keep animals out of the bedroom and bathroom and keep the door closed.
  - Isolate the pet from upholstered furniture and carpets.
  - Washing the pet weekly to may decrease the amount of dander and dried saliva.
- Use a HEPA-type air cleaner in the bedroom and elevate the cleaner off the floor.
  - Ionizing air filters create indoor ozone. Ozone is a carcinogen and safe indoor levels have not been carefully established.
- Close the air ducts in the bedroom.

## **Reduce Exposure to Tobacco Smoke & Wood Smoke**

*While tobacco and wood smoke are not TRUE allergens, they can cause nasal symptoms in patients with inhalant allergies.*

- Inform the family that there should be no smoking in the home or surrounding areas:
- Quit smoking.
- Minimize the use of wood-burning stoves and fireplaces.