

Specific suggestions to reduce exposure to tobacco smoke and wood smoke

While tobacco smoke 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:
 - ▶ Around the patient.
 - ▶ In the patient's home.
 - ▶ In the patient's car.
- Help family members and /or caregivers stop smoking.
- Limit the use of wood-burning stoves and fireplaces. (Encourage use of airtight stove/fireplace if wood must be burned.)

Common Allergen Sources

- Bedding
- Upholstered furniture
- Pets
- Water damage
- Carpet
- Moldy air conditioners, refrigerators, humidifiers, dehumidifiers
- Swamp coolers
- Kitchen or bathrooms without vents or windows. Laundry room without a vented dryer
- Crawl spaces
- Pollens from trees and grasses
- Molds

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What Can I Do To Reduce Airborne Allergens

**Head & Neck Institute
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216.444.6691**

General suggestions to reduce exposure to airborne allergens

- 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 you are sensitive to pollens). Note that peak pollination occurs at different times of the day for different plants (i.e., ragweed in the late morning, grasses in the afternoon).
- Shower or bathe and change clothes following outdoor activity.
- Dry clothes in vented dryer, not outside.

Specific suggestions to reduce exposure to mold and fungus allergens

Outdoor Exposure

- Do not walk through uncut fields, work with compost or dry soil, or rake leaves.
- Keep windows and doors closed.
- Avoid using window or attic fans that draw in outside air.
- Use air conditioning.

Indoor Exposure

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

Specific suggestions to reduce exposure to house dust mite allergens

“Must Do” Actions

- Encase mattress, pillow and box springs 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

“Should Do” Actions

- Remove carpets from the bedroom and carpets laid on concrete from all rooms.
- Reduce the number of upholstered furniture pieces in the home.
- Use HEPA-filters. Electrostatic filters can be used but note that although they are less efficient than HEPA filters, they still remove particles that can be inhaled.

Specific suggestions to reduce exposure to animal allergens

- Remove the pet from the home.
- If removal of the animal is not acceptable, then:
 - Keep the pet out of the bedroom and bathroom by closing the door.
 - Do not allow the pet on upholstered furniture and carpets.
 - Wash the pet weekly to decrease the amount of dander and dried saliva. (The evidence to support this recommendation had not been firmly established.)
 - Use a HEPA-type air cleaner in the bedroom and elevate the cleaner off the floor.
 - Close the air ducts in the bedroom.