

## Managing Your Allergy Symptoms

### **Molds**

- Repair plumbing leaks immediately.
- Clean gaskets of refrigerators and front loading washers to prevent mold growth.
- Buy a vacuum cleaner with a HEPA filter and sprinkle baking soda on carpets one hour before vacuuming to help absorb moisture.
- Wear a mask while cleaning moldy surfaces. These can be bought at your local drug or convenience store.
- Use vinegar and/or borax on bathroom and kitchen surfaces (including garbage disposal) where mold tends to grow. Borax is toxic if swallowed.
- Use a dehumidifier in basements and other moisture-heavy areas. Keep the dehumidifier clean by draining it regularly and keeping the coils dry.
- Run vent/fan in bathrooms for at least 15 minutes after taking a shower. Using them regularly can greatly reduce mold problems, and control allergies and asthma as a result.

### **Indoor Allergies (dust)**

- Vacuum weekly with a HEPA filter or a double-bagged vacuum. If you're extremely allergic, try wearing a dust mask while you vacuum, or have someone else do the job. Another option: Remove as much carpet from your home as you can. Go for tile, wood, or other hard flooring surfaces that are easy to clean with a broom and dust mop, rather than carpet that can trap allergy-provoking particles much more easily.
- Maintain humidity at less than 50 percent. Dust mites cannot survive in a low-humidity environment.
- Clean forced-air heating systems and air conditioners at least once a year.
- Dust furniture with a damp cloth rather than a dry one.
- Invest in a HEPA air purifier which will remove the smallest of microorganisms.
- Wash your bedding in hot water (greater than 130 degrees) weekly to kill the dust mites, and cover your mattress and pillows with dust mite covers to prevent the dust mites from nesting in the fabric. Avoid wool or down blankets.

### **Indoor Allergies (cats & dogs)**

- Choose pets without fur, such as turtles, fish or snakes. If you can't live without your furry friends, at least minimize your exposure by keeping them out of your bedroom.
- Keep air registers closed to your bedroom and use ac/heating units if there is a pet in the house.
- Frequent bathing of your pet can reduce the allergen count. If bathing is out of the question, try wiping your pet with fragrance-free hypoallergenic baby wipes.
- After playing with a pet, avoid touching your eyes and wash your hands immediately.
- Washing your pet's bedding regularly can help reduce your allergy symptoms.
- Don't keep rodents as pets. They give off highly potent allergens.
- Use washable area rugs and get rid of carpets.

### **Outdoor Allergies (plants & weeds)**

- Keep house and car windows closed to prevent the stir-up of pollen around you.
- Limit outside time during high pollen (midday and afternoon).
- If you have to mow the lawn, wear a pollen or dust mask.
- Rinse your eyes out with cool water or normal saline eye drops upon going indoors.
- Shower and change clothes after work or play and before bed.

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