Ferrell-Duncan Clinic Allergy/Immunology

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**MOLD**

Indoors, mold season is year round. Outdoors, most mold prefer seasons with high humidity. Mold prefers damp, dark, warm places. Here are some tips on how to avoid mold exposure.

1. Keep humidity inside between 35-50% with air conditioning or dehumidifier. The humidity level can be checked with a meter from a hardware store.
2. Clean surfaces where mold grows and dry wet areas.
3. Avoid steam cleaning carpets and discard moldy belongings.
4. Wear a mask when doing yard work and refrain from walking through uncut fields or playing in leaves.
5. Minimize use of potted plants and do not keep them indoors.
6. Consider an allergy cover for the pillow and mattress.

**POLLEN**

Pollens are the tiny airborne particles given off by trees, weeds, and grasses. They can be the cause of seasonal allergic rhinitis or hay fever symptoms, which include stuffy, itchy, runny nose, redness, swelling and itching of the eyes, and itching of the ears and throat. Here are some tips on how to avoid pollen exposure.

1. Keep windows closed and use the air conditioner when possible.
2. Avoid outside exposure in the early morning as pollen counts are highest at that time.
3. Take a shower and wash hair each night.
4. Consider wearing a mask when working in the yard and/or garden.
5. Clean furnace filter monthly with HEPA filters. Consider a HEPA filter vacuum cleaner which will prevent pollen from being reintroduced into the air.

**DUST MITES**

Dust mites can never be entirely eliminated in the house no matter how clean your house is. Dust mites are attracted to warm, moist areas and feed on dead skin flakes. Here are tips to minimize dust mites in your home.

1. Encase pillows and mattress/box springs in zippered allergy covers.
2. Wash bedding in hot water (at least 130°F) every 7-14 days.
3. Avoid curtains, carpet, and upholstered furniture. If they cannot be removed, treat every 3 months with tannic acid.
4. Use HEPA air filters and a HEPA filter vacuum cleaner. Change filters monthly.
5. Keep bedroom simple, avoiding clutter, so it can quickly be dusted.
6. Cover heating vents with vent filters.
7. Keep stuffed toys in a closed container and wash or freeze regularly.
8. Keep clothing in the closet with the door closed.

**PETS**

Pets present many problems for people with allergies. Dander from pets is very difficult to remove and also is a food source for dust mites.

1. If possible, find the pet a new home.
2. If not possible, keep the pet outdoors. Never allow the pet into the bedroom.
3. Wash pet weekly in warm water.
4. Encase mattresses, pillows, and box springs in allergen-proof covers.
5. Use HEPA air filters and a HEPA filter vacuum cleaner. Change filters monthly.

**COCKROACH**

Cockroaches are one of the leading causes of asthma attacks. Here are tips for eradication and prevention.

1. Exterminate entire home, then thoroughly clean including vacuuming.
2. Use roach traps and seal all cracks in the home.
3. Keep food in airtight containers and clean kitchen after every meal.
4. Do not store paper bags, newspapers, or cardboard boxes. Updated 12/2011