

Dust mites are microscopic creatures that thrive on dead skin scales we shed. Dust mites avoid the light, so they seek out soft materials like pillows, blankets, mattresses, and other fabrics that make it easy for them to hide. Beds provide dust mites with the warmth, darkness, high relative humidity, and skin scales they seek. Efforts to rid your home of dust mites should be focused in bedrooms, as these areas are the most susceptible to infestation. However, additional steps should be taken as well.

Bedrooms:

- Keep windows open as often as possible
- Use allergen-proof bed covers and pillowcases
- Wash bedding in hot water (over 360°F) every 1 to 2 weeks
- Replace curtains with wipeable blinds or shades (or wash curtains every 1 to 2 weeks)
- Place HEPA filter in bedrooms (for more information, see IFM's document titled "HEPA Air Purifiers")
- If possible, replace bedroom carpets with hardwood or tile flooring (or wash carpets frequently with a dry carpet cleaning product)

Household:

- Dust with a damp cloth
- Vacuum or mop floors weekly
- Minimize upholstered furniture
- Wear a facemask and goggles while cleaning
- Use air conditioning and a dehumidifier in the summer months
- Keep relative humidity in the home below 50% to prevent dust mite growth

Personal:

- Frequently wash or dry clean clothing
- Store clothing in a closet with the door closed
- Use nasal spray or a neti pot (for more information, see IFM's document titled "Nasal Cleansing Using a Neti Pot")
- Keep a symptom diary. Note any allergic symptoms you experience, along with where and when you experience them. Also note any other factors that may be contributing to symptoms (e.g., indoors, outdoors, odors, scents, any food or drink you're consuming when symptoms occur, etc.)