

ALLERGY AVOIDANCE TIPS

1. Avoid contact with irritating fumes generated by wood-burning stoves and kerosene heaters. Run your stove fan while cooking to lower humidity and remove fumes and smells.
2. Avoid irritants like tobacco smoke, aerosols, perfumes, and cleaning products with strong odors. Do not allow smoking in your home. If household members or guests must smoke, have them do it outside.
3. Stay indoors during the late morning and afternoon when pollen levels are at their highest. Keep outdoor exercise reserved for the early morning, late afternoon, or evening hours. When exercising outdoors, avoid very windy days.
4. Wear a Red Sox baseball hat and glasses or sunglasses to keep the pollen out of the eyes.
5. A daub of vaseline on the upper lip will help trap some pollen before being inhaled, and also serves to moisten the nasal membranes if irritated.
6. Undress outside your bedroom, leaving allergens from other places away from where you sleep. Wash your hair before going to bed during pollen season.
7. Don't dry clothes and bedding outside on a clothesline where pollens and molds will stick to them.
8. Avoid using window fans which draw pollens and molds into the house, and leave windows closed at night if possible.
9. Prune trees and bushes regularly to avoid heavy vegetation around the house.
10. Keep windows in your car closed and put your air conditioner on "recirculate."
11. Before relocating, try to visit the new location for 2 to 4 weeks to see if your symptoms improve. Remember that it may take months or years to develop allergic symptoms to a new allergen – any substance that causes allergy symptoms.
12. Replace down, feather, and foam pillows with fiberfill products. Seal your pillows and mattresses in allergy-proof coverings so dust mite allergens can't get to you.
13. Wash all bedding in hot water every week to kill dust mites. Dry these using hot dryer settings.
14. Run a night light continuously in dark closets to help reduce molds and mildew.
15. Bag your child's stuffed animals and keep them in the freezer during the day to kill dust mites.
16. Remove carpeting in your home if possible. Hardwood, tile, and linoleum are easier to keep dust-free.
17. Replace upholstered furniture with plastic, wooden, metal, or leather furniture that will hold onto allergens.
18. Regularly clean the base of your refrigerator, which is a haven for decaying food, insects, dust, and mold.
19. Reduce indoor molds resulting from high humidity by cleaning bathrooms, kitchens, and basements regularly.
20. To thoroughly clean, dust with a damp rag or mop, rather than dry dusting or sweeping.
21. When vacuuming, use double-thick disposable vacuum bags and a high efficiency HEPA filter. Wear a dust mask while vacuuming to avoid stirred-up dust. Leave a room that was just dusted or vacuumed for at least 20 minutes to allow airborne dust to resettle.
22. Use a dehumidifier to reduce molds, especially in damp, humid places like basements, maintaining a humidity level between 25% and 50%.
23. Thoroughly clean moldy areas with a 10-to-1 part diluted mixture of chlorine bleach and water.
24. Inspect and remove major sources of mold growth such as humidifiers, wet carpeting, rotted flooring, garbage containers, firewood, and water-damaged wallpaper.
25. Plan your vacations during high pollen season, but ensure to choose a place that has low pollen counts, such as the beach.
26. Air out and clean vacation homes if closed up all winter and susceptible to mold growth.
27. Before taking a lengthy auto trip, have your car's air conditioning unit thoroughly cleaned of mildew and mold.
28. Install and run a vent fan in the bathroom while showering and bathing.
29. Read the labels on all the foods you buy to detect hidden allergens like milk proteins, eggs, and nuts.
30. If you are allergic to bees, wasps, or yellow jackets, avoid wearing bright-colored clothing, especially yellow and purple in floral patterns. Also avoid scented hair spray, deodorants, and perfume, and avoid picnics and barbecues.
31. When using insecticides, have a non-allergic person spray while you are out of the home. Be sure to air out the home for a few hours before returning.
32. Wear a medical alert-type necklace or bracelet if you have serious allergies or life-threatening asthma.
33. Wash your hands immediately after petting any animal. Remove and wash your clothing immediately after visiting friends with pets.
34. Keep your pet out of the bedroom completely so you're not exposed to animal allergens while you sleep. Close the air ducts to your bedroom if you have forced-air heating/cooling.
35. HEPA room air purifiers are now less expensive, so consider purchasing one or two for your living room and bedroom.