



# Allergy & Asthma Medical Group & Research Center, A P.C.

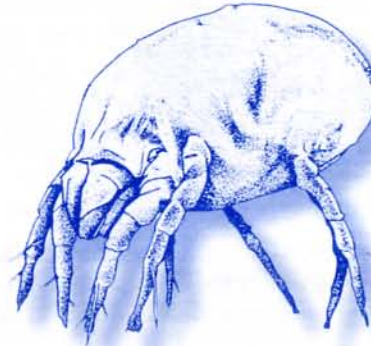
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## HOUSE DUST, DUST MITE AND DANDERS

### CONTROLLING POTENT TRIGGERS OF ALLERGIES AND ASTHMA

House dust is present (in varying degrees) in all homes. It is a combination of human and animal dander and hair, insect bodies, food particles, degenerated cotton fibers and other fibers from household items such as mattresses and stuffed furniture. Although many of these components cause allergic symptoms, the most important is the HOUSE DUST MITE.

The DUST MITE is a microscopic insect found in most homes, particularly in mattresses, carpets and upholstered furniture. It thrives in humid conditions with a new generation of mites produced every 3 weeks! The mite waste products are the major allergen to which people can react with symptoms of hay fever and asthma. Both dust and mite allergy can be diagnosed by skin testing.



As in the treatment of other types of allergy AVOIDANCE OF THE ALLERGEN is the first critical step in reducing the allergy symptoms it provokes. Two general rules:

- 1) **Emphasize dust control in the bedroom because of the large number of hours regularly spent there (approximately 1/3 or more of each 24-hour period).**
- 2) **When avoidance does not completely resolve symptoms, medication and/or allergy injections can help control symptoms of dust allergy.**

"Many children with asthma are allergic to dust mites. Removing the cause of the allergy from their bedrooms may reduce the frequency of asthma attacks", according to doctors at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada. "The Canadian researchers divided 20 asthmatic children into two groups with similar symptoms in order to compare the effects of a normal and **dust free environment**. While one group was told not to make any changes, the other was given zippered vinyl covers for their bedding. They were also instructed to clean the bedroom floor daily, to launder curtains, bedding and mattress pads in hot water every two weeks and to wipe drawers and closets with a damp cloth. Further instructions included removing carpets, upholstered furniture, toys, books and worn clothes from the room. Finally, any hot-air ducts were sealed and heat provided by an electric radiator, if necessary. At the end of the month, children who had eliminated sources of dust reported a total of only 10 hours of wheezing and 5 doses of medication. Youngsters who had made no change in their surroundings had had a total 339 hours of wheezing and had 224 doses of medication." Murray, A.M., et al., Pediatrics: Vol. 71, Page 418



## DUST AND ALLERGEN CONTROL IN THE BEDROOM

- 1) BEDS: Avoid bunk and canopy beds. All beds in the bedroom should be treated similarly by completely enclosing the mattresses and boxsprings in vinyl-backed dust-proof zippered encasings. Seal the zipper of the encasing with duct tape to prevent leakage. Vinyl-backed mattress encasings are available at Sears (catalogue) and other large department stores. A water bed is a good choice for individuals allergic to dust mites.
- 2) PILLOWS: Only dacron or other polyester fiber-filled pillows may be used, preferably with an encasing. When traveling or visiting, the patient should take his pillow with him.
- 3) BLANKETS OR QUILTS: Synthetic materials such as acrylic, dacron or polyester with flat nap should be used. AVOID wool or down bedding materials.
- 4) DECORATING: Use posters or prints rather than 3-dimensional wall pennants and hangings. Avoid stuffed animals and bookshelves filled with books or toys.
- 5) WINDOWS: Try to keep the windows closed as much as is possible. Lightweight washable curtains or vinyl shades may be used as coverings. Shutters or heavy drapes should not be used because they retain large amounts of dust.
- 6) CLOSETS: Only clothing and toys in current use should be kept in the closet. Extra clothing may be kept in vinyl zippered garment bags.
- 7) FLOOR: Preferably bare wood, linoleum or tile floors except for area rugs which can be removed from the room for cleaning or washing. Commercial or indoor-outdoor carpeting is preferable to that with a heavy nap.
- 8) VACUUMING: This leaves large amounts of fine dust in the air for up to 8 hours and is best done when the allergic individual is out of the home. Once a week the room should be cleaned with a damp mop and surfaces wiped with a damp cloth.
- 9) PETS: Cats and dogs are among the most notorious causes of allergic problems. They should not be kept inside of an allergic patient's home, specifically away from the allergic child's bedroom and play areas. If not already allergic to the pets, their presence invites the child to become sensitive to them.
- 10) SMOKE: People exposed to tobacco smoke in the home have more problems with nasal congestion, fluid in the ears and asthma. ***Smoking should occur only outside of the home!***
- 11) DEHUMIDIFIERS: Avoid vaporizers and other sources of humidification. Mites grow best at 75-80% relative humidity, and do not thrive at under 50% humidity.
- 12) AIR CONDITIONERS: Use of air conditioners is the most efficient way to rid the environment of allergens and irritants.
- 13) HEATING/FILTERS: Bedroom vents should be sealed with aluminum and tape to prevent dust-laden air from filling the room during furnace operation. Baseboard heater, radiant heat and electric blankets are the best source of "clean" heat in the bedroom. Dacron filter media is more efficient than the standard fiber glass filter and can be used as a substitute for the furnace. There are also charcoal-imbedded filters for maximal dust and allergen removal. Free-standing "HEPA" filters can be used for continuous air cleaning in a specific room.

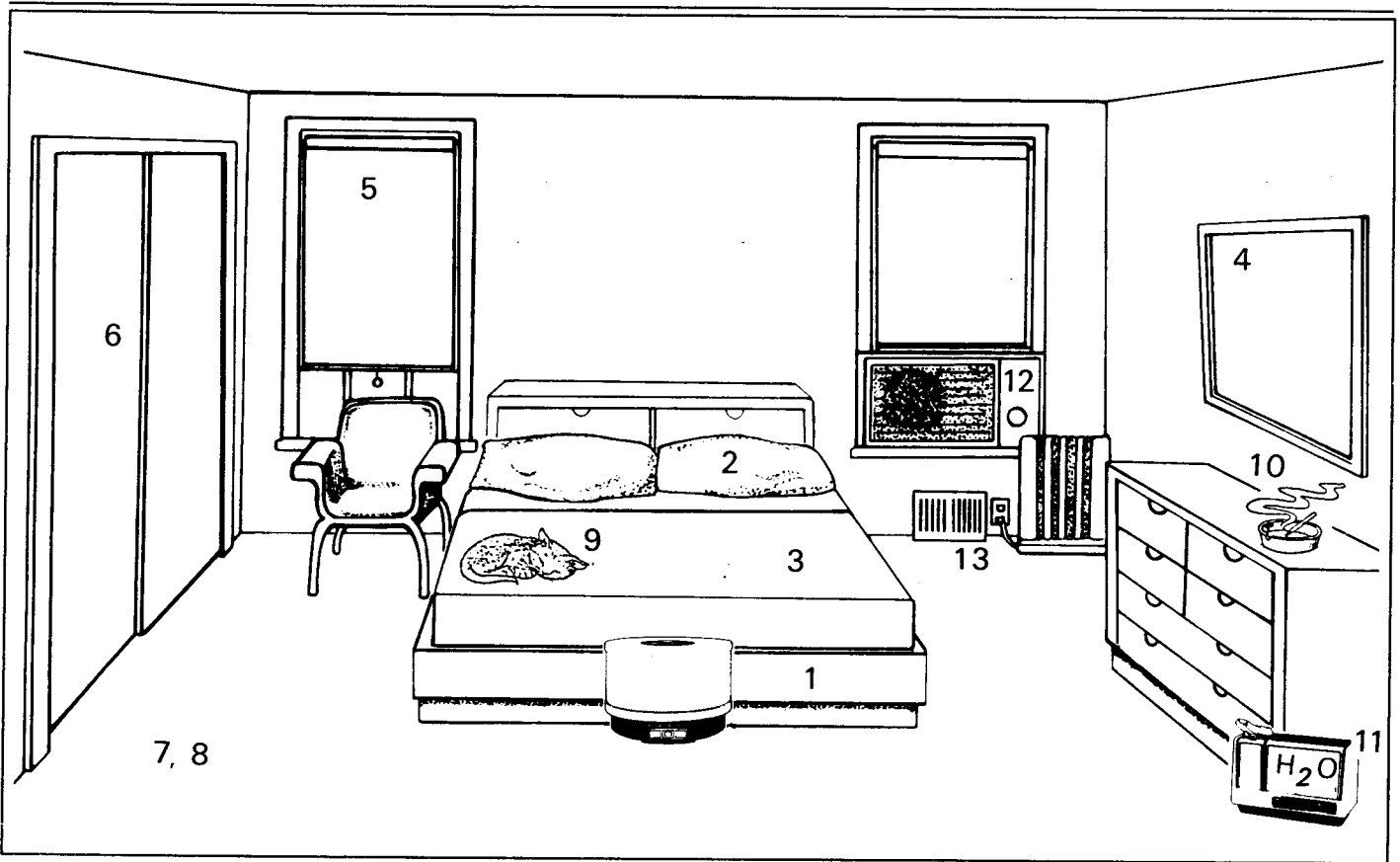
Dacron filter media and dependable advice on home heating systems can be obtained from heating companies including:

JACKSON AND BLANC HEATING & AIR CONDITIONING, 1970 Columbia St., San Diego, CA 92101  
Phone: (619) 236-1121

NEWTRON, P.O. Box 27175, 3874 Virginia Avenue, Cincinnati, OH 45227-0125 Phone: 1-800-543-9149

Other dust control products can be obtained from:  
ALLERGY CONTROL PRODUCTS, INC., 89 Danbury Rd., Ridgefield, CT 06877 Phone: 1-800-422-DUST

# ALLERGEN CONTROL IN THE BEDROOM



## NOTES:

*Questions regarding dust allergy and control of the symptoms it can trigger can be answered by your physician and health care team at Allergy and Asthma Medical Group.*