

Clean floors thoroughly and frequently

- ▶ Clean floors weekly with a damp mop and a fragrance-free cleaner
- ▶ Vacuum carpeting often to minimize dust and dust mites. Buy HEPA vacuum cleaner bags which are available in a medical supply store or catalog
- ▶ Keep the indoor humidity to 30-40% to prevent mold and dust mite growth. Use a dehumidifier and humidity gauge if possible

Keep pets out

Pet dander is one of the most serious allergy triggers. Cats, dogs, birds, and other pets should be kept out of the house or restricted to an area of the house that the allergic individual does not use.

Reduce clutter, remove dust-collectors

- ▶ Throw away old newspapers and magazines
- ▶ File bills, memos, and other paperwork
- ▶ Put books in covered bookshelves or cover books with vinyl
- ▶ Put collectibles and trophies in display cases
- ▶ Move potted plants outside

CAUTION: Hot Stuff

- ▶ It is best to avoid using wood or coal-burning stoves since they are not a clean source for heat and add to indoor pollution and indoor irritants
- ▶ Filters for forced hot air or central air systems should be changed monthly. Have someone who does not have allergies clean these areas regularly. If you must clean them yourself, wear a surgical mask available at a medical supply or hardware store
- ▶ Keep radiators clean and periodically check them for punctures or leaks

In the bathroom

- ▶ Reduce excess humidity or dampness that can promote mold or mildew

- ▶ Use an exhaust fan and/or dehumidifier
- ▶ Wipe all surfaces with fragrance-free cleaners that contain bleach frequently, especially around pipes and fixtures
- ▶ Avoid using hair spray, perfumes, and other toiletries with fumes in the confined space of a bathroom since these products can be irritants to the airways

In the kitchen

- ▶ Clean the exhaust hood over the stove often to reduce cooking fumes and keep air fresh
- ▶ Clean the refrigerator vent, drip pan, cooling fan, and the coils on the back

Protecting Yourself Outdoors

- ▶ Avoid morning exercise. During the pollinating season, increased pollen concentrations are found in early morning after sunrise
- ▶ Also, remember pollen counts are more problematic on sunny, windy, and low humidity days
- ▶ The use of appropriate prescription medications may help reduce symptoms

Allergy-proofing on the Job

It pays to BE ALLERGY ALERT! on the job too. You can put all of these trigger-proofing strategies to work for you.

Remove or reduce dust collectors

- ▶ File papers or memos that don't need to be on your desk
- ▶ Throw out old newspapers, magazines, and memos that clutter your bulletin board. Empty your wastebasket daily
- ▶ Throw away dried or plastic flowers
- ▶ Display trophies and other collectibles in cases or covered shelves
- ▶ Remove live plants, especially those in baskets that are likely to attract dust and mold

Protect equipment, keep your office clean

- ▶ Cover your computer, calculator, and other office equipment overnight. Damp-wipe equipment regularly to remove dust and other allergy triggers
- ▶ Damp-wipe your desk once a week
- ▶ Find out how often your office floor is damp-wiped or vacuumed. Try to get it done often enough to prevent any allergy symptoms
- ▶ Keep storage closets orderly. Damp-wipe shelves and walls often. Keep closet doors closed

Reduce allergens and indoor irritants in the air

- ▶ Encourage your employer to set a "NO SMOKING" policy in the building
- ▶ Keep office windows closed on high-pollen days
- ▶ If you work with strong chemicals in a dust-filled environment:
 - store solvents and other chemicals in tightly sealed containers inside locked closets
 - install a fume hood or electrostatic air filter
 - wear a surgical mask

Get Medical Advice About Allergies

Inform your doctor of any allergy symptoms and ask about the prescription medications that may help reduce them. Ask your doctor to explain how these medications work and which treatment is right for you.

References

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3. National Institutes of Health. *Asthma and Allergies—An Optimistic Future*. NIH Pub. No. 80-388; March 1980.
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BE ALLERGY ALERT!

**PROTECTING
YOURSELF**

AT HOME AND AWAY



An estimated 44 million Americans suffer from allergic rhinitis,¹ a condition which can severely impact daily activities at work or school. This brochure provides expert recommendations on how to reduce allergy triggers and help keep yourself symptom-free.

What Are Allergies?

Allergies are the physical manifestation of adverse immune responses following repeated contact with usually harmless substances. These substances are called allergy triggers or allergens.

What Are Typical Allergy Triggers?

Pollen, dust mites, mold, insect venom, and pet dander are common allergens. Strong chemical fumes and odors (including perfumes, fragrances in household cleaners and detergents), smoke, and air pollution are irritants to the airways and can cause allergy-like symptoms. Some people may also have food allergies.

How Common Are Allergies?

More than 50 million Americans suffer from allergic disease,² while 44 million Americans have allergic rhinitis, the most common allergy illness.¹ More children than ever before have allergies. Up to 40% of children may be affected by allergic rhinitis,² and as many as 2 million school days a year are missed because of allergies.³

What Are Typical Allergy Symptoms?

Typical allergy symptoms are sneezing, a stuffy or runny nose, watery eyes, a dry cough, and itchy nose, ears, or palate. Some people with allergies also suffer from eczema, asthma, sinusitis, and middle ear fluid.

Are Allergy Symptoms Seasonal or Year Round?

Allergy symptoms can occur at any time of the year. Some people have seasonal allergies, usually caused by tree or grass pollen and ragweed. Other people have allergy symptoms all year long—also known as perennial allergies—and are allergic to dust mites, pet dander, and molds. For those with seasonal allergies, the spring and fall are difficult. Allergy symptoms can get much worse as pollen levels rise during the spring, when the trees and grass are beginning to bloom, in the summer, when the weeds grow rapidly, and in the fall, when dry leaves are on the ground. The mold that grows on dead leaves also makes allergy symptoms worse during the fall.

At Home

Allergy Protection: Begin in the Bedroom

Make your bedroom a starting point to reduce allergy triggers. You spend more time in your bedroom than in most other areas of your home. The bedroom is a common place for allergy triggers such as dust mites, pollen, mold, aerosol fumes, perfume, and other personal care products to accumulate.

Decorate to help reduce or prevent allergy triggers. Look around your bedroom for dust-collecting furnishings that can be replaced or altered to reduce or prevent allergy triggers. Here are some examples:

Allergy Triggers	
YES	NO
ornate, upholstered, carved, or tufted surfaces	leather, wood, or smooth-surface furniture with sleek, straight surfaces
flocked or textured wall coverings	washable wall coverings
venetian blinds, heavy drapes	washable shades, curtains, or valances
shag or deep-pile carpeting with a textured surface	no carpeting or washable throw rugs
rough-surface tile or cement	washable tile, smooth surface
unfinished wood	acrylic-finished wood flooring
macrame, tapestries, lacy or carved frames	smooth-surface picture frames or wall hangings
straw, rattan, and other natural fibers	washable throw pillows, bedspreads, feather pillows, or down comforters

Other hints:

- ▶ Avoid textured wall coverings
- ▶ Consider semigloss or gloss paint that is easy to damp-wipe. Use paints that contain a fungicide or a fungicide primer before applying a smooth-surface wall covering

Use allergen-proof bedding, launder in hot water

- ▶ Use nonallergenic pillows, mattresses, and comforters made with synthetic fibers and protect with dust-proof covers
- ▶ Wash bedding in hot water every week with fragrance-free detergent

Keep closets clean and closed; closets are an ideal environment for dust and other allergens to collect

- ▶ Organize closets for easy cleaning. Vacuum and damp-wipe surfaces often with a fragrance-free cleaner
- ▶ Store clothes that are not worn often in garment bags
- ▶ Always keep outerwear just inside the front door to avoid carrying outdoor allergy triggers throughout the house
- ▶ Avoid storing items in the same closets with your garments in order to reduce allergy triggers in your wardrobe

Remove airborne pollen, mold, and other airway irritants

- ▶ Set a “NO SMOKING” policy. It keeps the air clean and reduces indoor irritants dramatically
- ▶ Keep windows closed and use an air conditioner to filter air, particularly during high-pollen seasons
- ▶ Clean or change the air filters in your air-conditioning and heating systems often
- ▶ Consider HEPA (High-Efficiency Particulate Air) filtering system. Studies show that HEPA filters reduce allergens⁴
- ▶ Clean the drip pan in your air conditioner, humidifier, or dehumidifier often