

Appendix 1

Patient information sheets

The majority of these recommendations are applicable in high-income, developed countries - cost-effectiveness still to be tested.

House dust mite allergen reduction:

Aims to reduce exposure to mite allergens in the home

Major strategies

- ♦ Wash bedding regularly (every 1 –2 weeks) at 55-60°C, if possible, to kill mites: (*washing with cold water removes 90% of mite allergens; washing at 55-60°C kills mites but does not denature mite allergens*)
- ♦ Wash pillows and duvets in hot water 55-60°C and encase pillows and encase mattresses with documented protective coverings
- ♦ Sufficient ventilation of dwellings to decrease humidity; aim to reduce indoor relative humidity to below 50% and avoid damp housing conditions

Additional strategies

- ♦ Use a good quality vacuum cleaner (if possible one fitted with High Efficiency Particulate Air filter)
 - ♦ Use a damp duster when dusting and cleaning surfaces
 - ♦ Replace wall to wall carpets with linoleum or wooden floors which can be wiped clean
 - ♦ Remove/reduce curtains and soft furnishings in the bedroom
 - ♦ Replace fabric-covered seating with leather or vinyl
 - ♦ Remove soft toys from the bedroom; wash them at 55-60°C or freeze them (in a kitchen deep-freezer) to kill house dust mites
 - ♦ Do not allow pets in the bedroom
 - ♦ House dust mites are transparent and have no natural protection against sunlight. Exposure of mattresses, rugs and carpets to direct strong sunlight (for more than 3 hours) kills mites and can be used in appropriate regions.
 - ♦ A hammock, easily washable and amenable to air and sun drying, is used in many areas of the world
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Pollen avoidance:

Provides mechanical barriers to pollen contact

- ♦ Keep windows closed at peak pollen times, eg, in the evening when airborne pollens descend to lower altitudes
 - ♦ Wear glasses or sunglasses to prevent pollens entering the eyes
 - ♦ Consider wearing a mask over nose and mouth to prevent inhalation of pollens at peak time
 - ♦ Do not cut grass yourself
 - ♦ Keep windows closed when the grass has been mown
 - ♦ Use air-conditioning if possible
 - ♦ Install car pollen filters if possible
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Pet allergen avoidance:

Reduces the amount of pet allergen indoors

- ♦ If possible, find another home for the pet, and do not bring new animals into the home
 - ♦ Exclude pets from bedrooms and if possible keep pets outdoors
 - ♦ Vacuum carpets, mattresses and upholstery regularly, if a power source and equipment are available
 - ♦ Change clothes before going to school/work if you have attended your horse/cat/dog
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Cockroach allergen avoidance:

Removes the cockroaches, eliminates the places and conditions in which they can live, and removes allergens

- ♦ Eradicate cockroaches with appropriate insecticides

- * Seal cracks in floors and ceilings
 - * Remove sources of food
 - * Control dampness
 - * Scrub floors with water and detergent to remove allergens
 - * Bedding, curtains and clothing can be contaminated and must be washed
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Mould allergen avoidance:

Prevents mould from growing, and mould spores from becoming airborne during mould removal

Indoors:

- * Use dehumidifiers in the home if relative humidity is constantly high (*above 50%*)
- * Ensure heating, ventilation or air-conditioning systems are properly maintained
- * Use 5% ammonia solution to remove mould from bathrooms and other contaminated surfaces
- * Replace carpets with hard flooring; replace wallpaper with paint
- * Repair indoor water damage immediately

Outdoors:

- * Avoid cutting grass in late summer when mould spores are present in decaying vegetation
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Severe Reactions, Allergic Anaphylaxis

Aims to prevent contact with the allergens that induce anaphylaxis in susceptible individuals, and to provide strategies for dealing with episodes of anaphylaxis

- * Carry an epinephrine auto-injector and know how and when to use it; always have a spare auto-injector available; always replace auto-injectors when use-by date has expired
 - * Carry an emergency pager or mobile telephone to call assistance
 - * Carry/wear Medic-Alert information
 - * When travelling abroad, carry an anaphylaxis-alert card in the language of the country being visited, detailing food, drug, latex and insect allergies
 - * Avoid stinging insects, and learn how not to attract them:
 - do not wear perfumes or bright colours
 - do not pick ripe fruit, avoid refuse bins and compost heaps which attract insects
 - keep car windows closed when driving
 - * Avoid allergenic ingredients in ready-made food by learning how to interpret ingredient lists
 - * If eating out check with the chef that allergenic foods/oils are not used in dishes; explain the significance of avoiding allergenic ingredients
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In school environment:

Ensure that parents, teachers, fellow students, and school administrators are aware of the necessity to provide a safe environment for children at risk for anaphylaxis to foods or insect stings.

- * Create a no-food area of the school playground
 - * Identify a supervisor to carry a telephone for emergencies
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In occupational environment:

- * Avoid contact with airborne or contact allergens; for example, airborne latex can be avoided by co-workers using powder-free latex gloves

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Printed by the WHO Document Production Services, Geneva, Switzerland