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Control of House Dust and Other Allergic Substances

1. House dust is a frequent cause of allergic symptoms. It comes from mattresses, box springs, pillows, over-stuffed furniture, comforters, rugs and heating systems. It is especially important to keep your bedroom as dust free as possible since you spend eight hours daily in it. To prepare a dust free bedroom:
 - a. Remove all unnecessary dust catchers such as stuffed chairs, books, large rugs, excessive pictures or toys. Washable throw rugs, curtains and toy animals are permitted. Pets should never be allowed in the bedroom.
 - b. Remove all feather and kapok pillows and heavy comforters. Dacron pillows are recommended - these can be cleaned by "fluffing" in a clothes dryer.
 - c. Polyurethane mattress and box springs are desirable. If your present mattress and box springs are over ten years old, encase them with zippered mite proof covers. Place a fitted washable mattress pad over the mite proof cover. Air out the bed for one hour before making it. Do not use dryer strips (Bounce, Cling Free) in linens.
 - d. Clean the room thoroughly and regularly - walls, woodwork, ceilings, floors. Clean out the closet and store as much as possible elsewhere.
 - e. Close off hot-air registers if the room can be heated from the hall. If not, tape several layers of cloth over the register. Be sure the furnace filters are changed regularly. A furnace or room humidifier is of value during the winter. A cool mist vaporizer serves the same function. In severe cases, an electronic air-cleaner can be beneficial.
2. Keep the remainder of the house as dust free as possible. Vacuum rugs and furniture at frequent intervals. Purchase synthetic rugs and furniture (foam or polyester) when possible. Avoid kapok pillows. Keep pets off living room furniture and clean frequently where they sleep. For very dusty cleaning, wear a mask over your mouth - drug stores carry these. Leave rooms right after vacuum cleaner has been run. Dampen dust cloths and mops with Endust, etc., or furniture polish before using. If strong ammonia or pine cleaners bother you, avoid their use.
3. With associated pollen allergies, air-conditioning is helpful. Do not set it at too cold a temperature or sit in front of the draft. Run it to "recirculate" room air. Avoid long car rides when the pollen count is high. Keep bedroom windows shut during the day during your pollen season.
4. Moldy basements require dehumidifying and disinfecting - hardware stores sell fungicides. Occasionally molds are problems under kitchen sinks, in shower stalls or where there is no basement and a damp crawl space.
5. Avoid perfumes, hair sprays, spray deodorants and cigarette smoke if these aggravate your symptoms. Scented talcum powder and bath soaps are often irritating. Relatives of patients should try to avoid smoking in their immediate presence.