[**Dust Mites Fact Sheet**](https://www.achooallergy.com/blog/learning/dust-mites-fact-sheet/)

Here are some quick facts about dust mites and the dust mite allergy.

* Much smaller than a grain of sand, dust mites are too tiny to be seen with the human eye.
* At least 10% of the human population and approximately 80% of allergy sufferers are allergic to proteins that are found in the waste and decomposed body parts of dust mites.
* Dust mite allergen is the number one cause of perennial allergic rhinitis.
* If you often wake up with congestion, a runny nose, watery eyes, itching, or sneezing, then you are probably allergic to dust mites.
* Dust mites flourish in warm, humid environments.
* Your bed is the perfect environment for dust mites; they love to burrow into fabric and feast on your dead skin cells. Humans shed one to three pounds of skin a year, plenty of food for millions of dust mites.
* A gram (about a half teaspoon) of dust contains as many as 1,000 dust mites and 250,000 allergenic dust mite fecal pellets.
* Dust mite populations increase rapidly. Each egg-laying female can increase the population by 25 or 30 new mites per week.
* Depending on its age, your mattress may house between one million and ten million dust mites. It is important to change your mattress after the recommended time period for healthy sleeping.



* During its 80-day lifespan, the average dust mite produces about 1,000 allergen waste particles.
* The weight of the average mattress doubles after ten years due to dust mite infestation, and the weight of the average pillow increases 10% after one year.
* Dust mite populations peak during the hot, humid months of July and August.
* Dust mites grow best at 75-80% relative humidity, and they cannot survive when the humidity is below 50%.
* A Johns Hopkins University study showed that mite population and allergen levels decreased by 90% or more within a month of placing mattress and pillow covers and treating bedding.
* You can help to control for dust mite allergies by using scientifically-proven environmental control devices, specifically HEPA filtration and dust mite allergy covers.

To control the dust mite population in your home, alleviate your allergy symptoms, and breathe better, we recommend that you take the following steps.

1. Encase your mattress and pillows with [allergy bedding](https://www.achooallergy.com/allergy-bedding/) to form an impenetrable barrier between you and the dust mite allergens. It is especially important to note the pore size on mattress and pillow covers. Our highest-quality allergy bedding, an average pore size of less than 10 microns is best for reducing allergic and asthmatic reactions from dust mites and pet dander.
2. Frequently wash all of the bedding that you use on top of your encasings in hot water. You should wash your allergy mattress covers two to four times per year. Drying at high heat can also kill dust mites, though for some fabrics, this isn’t advisable.
3. Unfortunately, for safety reasons, most washing machines do not use water hot enough (140°F) to kill all dust mites. AchooAllergy.com offers a laundry wash and dust mite laundry additive that kills dust mites in any temperature of water. You should use these additives if you are unable to wash with hot water.
4. Vacuum your mattress with a [HEPA vacuum cleaner](https://www.achooallergy.com/vacuum-cleaners/) before putting on your allergy bedding. Using a vacuum with a HEPA filter traps allergens and prevents them from blowing out into your room through the exhaust.
5. Dust mites also thrive in carpets and upholstery. You can consider using a dust mite powder in your home. It is important for you to vacuum frequently or in cases where it is possible, replace the carpet all together. In addition, when medically advised/prescribed by a doctor, the cost of the replacement may be tax deductible.
6. Avoid upholstered furniture. Bedding, carpet and upholstered furniture are the three primary safe havens for dust mites.
7. Keep your clothing in a closet with the door shut. Consider using a laundry additive or allergen laundry detergent to get rid of dust mites and other allergens on your clothes.
8. Use a humidity monitor to check the humidity in your home and use an air conditioner or a dehumidifier to control and reduce the humidity. Dust mites grow best at 75-80% relative humidity and cannot live in environments where humidity levels are below 50%.
9. Consider running a [HEPA air purifier](https://www.achooallergy.com/air-purifiers/), to remove dust, airborne dust mite waste particles, and other allergens from the air in your home for clean, healthy breathing.
10. If you travel consider taking your own pillow or a pillow cover to protect your face while sleeping.