

Allergy Avoidance: New Construction

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The environmental precautions listed below are given as guidelines. Your doctor may recommend all or only some of these environmental controls depending upon your specific condition.

Dust Mite

1. Dual Hot Water Heaters - Bedding must be washed in scalding hot water to kill mites. Unfortunately, this presents a risk of scalding to small children who may be living in the home. Installing a separate hot water heater to serve the washing machine and dish washer, set at a temperature over 130 degrees, would reduce the risk of scald injury. The main hot water heater for the family could be set at a temperature less than 120 degree.
2. Hard Wood Floors - The bedroom of an allergic patient is the most important place to institute environmental avoidance measures. Having no carpeting in the bedroom and T.V. room greatly reduces mite exposure.
3. Vacuum Cleaner - Although generally "special" vacuum cleaners offer no benefit, a central vacuum cleaner which vents exhaust outdoors may significantly reduce the amount of dust disturbed in the home during routine cleaning.
4. Central Dehumidifier - Although many people feel humidity in the homes improves their allergy symptoms, high humidity actually serves as "fertilizer" for dust mites and mildew molds. A central dehumidifier that keeps the relative humidity below 30% will lead to decrease growth of mites and mold in the home.
5. Central Air Filter - Although routinely cleaning and changing central air filter is very important, spending a great deal of money is usually not necessary. Upgrading from a standard filter to a high efficiency or washable filter may be desirable. The extra expense of an electrostatic filter may not yield more filtering power. Electrostatic filters offer little advantage in terms of filtering power over standard high efficiency filters, and are much more expensive. Certainly the exorbitant cost of a HEPA filter is not warranted, and HEPA filters are not recommended.

Cockroach

1. Well-Ventilated Attic - Research into how to best avoid the allergens produced by cockroaches is not as well advanced as for dust mites. Since cockroaches usually reproduce in the attic, having a well-ventilated attic could potentially reduce the amount of cockroach allergens in a home. Adequate ventilation of the attic should be discussed with your architect or contractor.

Mold

1. Paint - Mold resistant paint, paint additives, and wallpaper paste additives should be used in areas which are prone to mold growth when building.