

## What are house dust mites?

House dust mites are tiny insects that live and grow in house dust. Dust mites eat dead skin flakes. They are found in places like pillows, mattresses, carpet, stuffed toys and upholstered furniture.



## How do they affect people?

House dust mites can cause allergy symptoms in children and adults. Skin testing can be done to detect a dust mite allergy.

## How can they be controlled?

There are many things that can be done to reduce dust mites in the home. Try these things to help improve symptoms:



- Cover mattresses, box springs and bed pillows with special covers. The covers are called dust mite encasements, allergy proof bedding, mite covers or anti-allergen covers
- Wash all bedding weekly. This includes sheets, pillows, mattress pads and stuffed toys. Use hot water (130°F).
- Vacuum all carpets, rugs and upholstered furniture at least once a week.
- Keep humidity level in house below 50%. Use a dehumidifier if needed.
- Remove curtains, blinds, books and toys, especially stuffed toys, from the bedroom areas. This will help reduce dust levels.
- If possible, remove or do not install wall-to-wall carpeting. This is most helpful in the bedroom areas.

**ALERT:** Call your child's doctor, nurse, or clinic if you have any questions or concerns or if your child has special health care needs that were not covered by this information.

**This sheet was created to help you care for your child or family member. It does not take the place of medical care. Talk with your healthcare provider for diagnosis, treatment and follow-up.**