



How to Prepare a Dust and Mold Controlled Bedroom



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Bed

Anyone with serious allergies should sleep in a bedroom with as little house dust and mold as possible. Dust mites and their waste products and mold are major allergy and asthma triggers. The room should contain only 1 bed (per person) of metal or wood. If a second bed is necessary, it should also be prepared as will be described, even though it is not occupied. It is important to note that we do not know for sure whether the following advice works; however, reports suggest that the following measures may help.

Cover the mattress with a zippered plastic cover, readily available in department stores or online. If any box spring is used, it must be similarly encased. Seal the zipper ends of the encasing with wide adhesive tape. Since foam rubber mattresses develop molds after 6 months, they should also be encased with the plastic covers. The most ideal bed covering is the dacron comforter. Cotton, rayon, or synthetic fiber blankets are also good. A thin synthetic or cotton mattress pad is permitted. Flannel in bedding, pajamas, or other clothing is definitely undesirable. Pillows should be made of a dacron or other synthetic fiber. Kapok, feather, down pillows, or foam rubber should not be used.

It is advisable to wash sheets and blankets in hot water (130°F) at least once every week.

Bedroom

Upholstered furniture, pillows, stuffed toys, fabric window drapes, and dust-catching ornaments should be kept to a minimum. Simple wooden or metal furniture is satisfactory. As much as possible, remove all excess stored clothing, toys, packages, and other articles from the closet. The closet should contain only the patient's clothing in current use and should be as free of dust as the room. Keep the closet door closed at all times.

Carpets trap a lot of dust. Therefore, if at all possible, carpet should be removed and hardwood floors or tiles should be installed. If this is not possible, weekly vacuuming with a vacuum that has a special filter is advisable. However, care should be taken not to vacuum in the presence of the patient because the vacuum may stir up dust in the room. Cotton washable rugs may be used if they are kept clean.



Close and cover all furnace pipe outlets in the room at all times with layers of cheesecloth. Otherwise, the room will become filled with dust-laden air during the operation of the furnace.

Another option is to use an air filter. This can be a central filter placed into the heating system of the house, or a portable unit. The most efficient filters are called high efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filters. These remove particles as small as 0.3 microns (1 micron = 1 millionth of a meter) in size, at 99.97% efficacy.

An electric heater may be used to heat the room. Electric blankets may also be used. Move the bed and the remaining (un-upholstered) furniture in order to clean the room thoroughly. The entire room should have a thorough initial cleaning from top to bottom with warm, soapy water, including the molding, lights, shelves, closets, walls, floors, etc. Repeat every three months as necessary.

Plain light washable or plastic curtains may be used at the window if kept dust-free. No drapes or venetian blinds should be used. Remove banners and other dust-collectors from the walls. Keep the room dust-free with frequent cleanings and a weekly wiping down with a damp cloth and mop. Keep the door and windows closed during the day after airing and cleaning in the morning. The allergic patient should not be in the room that is being cleaned. Dehumidifiers are recommended as long as they are cleaned weekly to prevent mold and mildew. Air conditioning can also reduce humidity, and thus reduce dust and mold.

Pets and Toys

Since dogs, cats, and birds are some of the most notorious causes of allergic troubles, ideally, the patient should not live in a home where they are kept. Even if he or she is not already allergic to these animals, a patient may develop an allergy to any animal with feathers or fur. Replace any ordinary stuffed animals or dolls with hypoallergenic toys (stuffed with synthetic materials). Toys should be washable in hot water. These are sold in many stores.

Irritants

Do not expose the patient to tobacco smoke or strong fumes (eg, paint, turpentine, cooking odors, perfume, room deodorizers) that are irritating. Ask smokers to smoke outside. Wood stoves and fireplaces should be avoided. The patient should not nap or sleep elsewhere unless the bed has been prepared as above. A couch or sofa cannot be encased and, therefore, is not permissible. If the patient is confined to bed by illness, do not bring in extra kapok or feather pillows. When the patient visits or travels, he/she should take his/her own pillow.