

# ALLERGY-PROOFING YOUR HOME

Many things in your home can trigger allergic reactions or make them worse. These troublemakers (allergens) include dust, mold, animals, and pollens. The less your home contains these allergens, the more comfortable your child will be and the less medication your child will require to alleviate allergy symptoms. Common allergy symptoms are cough, sneezing, itchy & watery eyes, eczema and runny nose (rhinitis).

## WHAT TO DO TO MINIMIZE HOUSEHOLD DUST EXPOSURE

- \* Cover pillow, mattress & box spring with airtight vinyl or nylon zip-on covers
- \* Replace upholstered headboard
- \* Use furniture that can be wiped clean with a damp cloth
- \* Replace down & feather pillows with synthetic filled pillows (not foam rubber)
- \* Replace wool blankets and down comforters with cotton or synthetic blankets
- \* Wash sheets, blankets, curtains, and rugs often using hot water to kill dust mites
- \* Use washable curtains instead of drapes
- \* Use roller shades or vertical instead of horizontal Venetian blinds
- \* Remove carpets and damp mop floor often
- \* Wash stuffed animals frequently in hot water and dry in dryer
- \* Close forced-air heating outlets or cover with filters
- \* Keep extra books and knickknacks to a minimum

## WHAT ABOUT PETS

- \* Don't buy a furry or feathered pet for the allergic child
- \* Keep pets outside as much as possible
- \* Keep indoor pets out of your child's bedroom
- \* Wash hand well after contact with pets
- \* Wash the pet once a week
- \* Vacuum carpets regularly to remove hair and fleas
- \* Don't let your child travel in the same car as a pet
- \* If you live on a farm, minimize your child's chores around the animals

## THE POLLEN SEASONS

- \* Spring - Trees, pollen counts are highest in the early morning
- \* Spring to Fall - Grasses, pollen counts are highest in the early evening
- \* Late Summer to Fall - Ragweed, pollen counts are highest midday

## AND FOR ALL ALLERGIES

- \* Minimize exposure to cigarette smoke; it makes the respiratory tract more vulnerable to allergens
- \* A high-efficiency particulate-arresting (HEPA) filter may be helpful in your child's room, however they can be costly

## HOW TO AVOID MOLD GROWTH

- \* Keep humidity low (40-50%)
- \* Use exhaust fans in kitchen and bathroom.
- \* Keep all rooms well ventilated
- \* Wash bathroom well with mold-killing cleaners such as Lysol or bleach
- \* Launder shower curtain and liner frequently
- \* Waterproof your basement as much as possible
- \* Clean the refrigerator often to avoid growth of mold
- \* Dehumidify damp areas such as basements  
Remove old wall paper and replace with mold proof paint
- \* Check closets for moldy shoes and boots
- \* Keep household plants and dried flowers to a minimum, inspect for mold
- \* Check and clean out air conditioners and vaporizers
- \* Remove or keep child away from compost piles, mold grow well here

## IF YOUR CHILD HAS POLLEN ALLERGIES

- \* Keep windows closed during pollen seasons,
- \* use an air conditioner if possible
- \* If you must open windows for ventilation, keep closed when pollen counts are highest
- \* Dry linens indoors instead of on a outside line
- \* Avoid outside activities when pollen counts are high