

## House Dust Mite Avoidance

Allergy to House Dust Mite (HDM) or more accurately the faeces of HDM is very common. HDM allergy is a common cause of perennial rhinitis. HDM lives in all our bedding and soft furnishings. It is a very small (microscopic) mite that eats and thrives on our shed skin.

There are several simple things we can do to control exposure to HDM and reduce the amount of nasal irritation or rhinitis that results.

Most exposure to HDM occurs when asleep in the bedroom, therefore start there.

- Vacuum regularly. A vacuum cleaner with an anti allergy filter is best, several makes are available.
- Keep room tidy, minimize areas where dust collects.
- Open the windows regularly, turn central heating down a little.
- Replace thick carpets with laminate or vinyl type floors that wont store HDM.
- Cover the mattresses and pillows with covers that resist HDM. These are available from department stores and large chemist shops.
- Remove or regularly clean soft toys.
- Soft toys can be placed in a plastic bag and frozen for 12 hours to kill HDM. Washing above 60°C also kills HDM.
- Changing the mattress and pillows and using HDM resistant covers from the outset.
- Removing fabric curtains and replacing with blinds

Utilising some of the above advice will help control symptoms from exposure to HDM.

Additional medication may still be required to control rhinitis, this might include saline nasal washing, use of steroid nasal sprays, and taking antihistamines.