

Patient allergen avoidance information

The reason you have been given this leaflet is because your blood test results have helped to determine what allergic triggers may exacerbate your asthma symptoms. It is therefore important that wherever possible, you try to avoid these triggers and reduce exposure to them

Asthma is a chronic inflammatory disorder that narrows the airways and is a serious public health problem that affects both children and adults.

Exposure to allergens to which you are allergic may increase asthma symptoms and cause asthma exacerbations in patients who have asthma.

By identifying and managing your allergic triggers and taking your asthma medications correctly, you can help to keep your asthma under control.

About Allergy

The most common causes of allergic reactions in asthma are:

- pollen from trees and grasses
- proteins secreted from house dust mites
- moulds
- pets such as cats and dogs, and other furry or hairy animals such as horses, rabbits and guinea pigs

Common symptoms associated with allergic conditions include:

- sneezing
- wheezing / coughing / shortness of breath
- sinus pain / runny nose
- nettle rash / hives
- swelling
- itchy eyes, ears, lips throat and mouth
- sickness, vomiting & diarrhoea

How Do I Manage My Allergy?

The best defence against most allergies is to avoid the allergens that cause your symptoms. Avoidance and exposure reduction reduce the risk of an allergic reaction.

Asthma may be triggered by more than 1 allergen and you may be allergic to 3 or 4 different allergens.

Allergy UK has produced factsheets that advise on how you can reduce exposure depending on which allergens you are allergic to.





House dust mites

One of the biggest causes of allergies are dust mites, which are tiny insects found in household dust.

You can limit the number of mites in your home by:

- choosing wood or hard vinyl floor coverings instead of a carpet
 - fitting roller blinds that can be easily wiped clean
 - choosing leather, plastic or vinyl furniture instead of upholstered furniture
 - cleaning cushions, soft toys, curtains and upholstered furniture regularly, either by washing (at a high temperature) or vacuuming
 - using tested allergy-proof covers on mattresses, duvets and pillows
 - using a vacuum cleaner fitted with a HEPA (high efficiency particulate air) filter, as it can trap more dust mites than ordinary vacuum cleaners
 - regularly wiping surfaces with a damp, clean cloth – avoid dry dusting, as this can spread dust into the air
- Concentrate your efforts of controlling dust mites in the areas of your home where you spend the most time, such as the bedroom and living room.

allergyuk.org/resources/house-dust-mite-allergy-factsheet/



Pets

It's not pet fur that causes an allergic reaction. Instead, it's flakes of their dead skin, saliva and dried urine. If you cannot permanently remove a pet from the house, you could try:

- keeping pets outside as much as possible, or limiting them to a particular area of the house, preferably an area without carpet
- not allowing pets in bedrooms
- washing pets at least once a week
- regularly grooming pets outside
- regularly washing all bedding and soft furnishings pets lie on
- using an air filter in rooms where you spend most of your time
- increasing ventilation with fans or air conditioning, or by opening windows

If you're visiting a friend or relative with a pet, ask them not to dust or vacuum on the day you're visiting, as this will stir up the allergens into the air.

Your HCP may suggest taking an antihistamine medicine about an hour before entering a pet-inhabited house can also help reduce your symptoms.

allergyuk.org/resources/pet-allergy-factsheet/





Mould spores

Tiny particles released by moulds can cause an allergic reaction in some people.

You can help prevent this by:

- keeping your home dry and well ventilated
- removing any indoor pot plants from your home
- not drying clothes indoors, not storing clothes in damp cupboards, and avoiding packing clothes too tightly in wardrobes
- dealing with any damp and condensation in your home
- avoiding damp buildings, damp woods and rotten leaves, cut grass and compost heaps

allergyuk.org/resources/mould-allergy-advice-factsheet/



Hay fever

Pollen allergies, more commonly known as hay fever, are caused when trees and grasses release pollen into the air. Doctors often call hay fever allergic rhinitis. Different plants pollinate at different times of the year, so the months you get hay fever will depend on what sort of pollen you're allergic to. Typically, people are affected during spring (trees) and summer (grasses).

To help keep your hay fever under control, you can:

- check weather reports for the pollen count and stay indoors when it's high, if possible
- avoid drying clothes and bedding outside when the pollen count is high
- wear wraparound sunglasses to protect your eyes
- keep doors and windows shut when possible
- shower and change your clothes after being outside
- avoid grassy areas, such as parks and fields, particularly in the early morning, evening or night, when the pollen count is highest
- if you have a lawn, try asking someone else to cut the grass for you

allergyuk.org/resources/allergic-rhinitis-and-hay-fever-fact-sheet/



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