



**ALLERGY PROOFING
YOUR HOME BY
TACKLING DUST
AND POLLUTANTS**

ABSTRACT

Allergy-proofing your home is essential for creating a healthy living environment, especially for individuals sensitive to dust, pollen, and indoor pollutants. This process involves a series of strategic steps to minimize allergens and improve indoor air quality. Key methods include regular cleaning practices such as dusting with damp cloths, using air purifiers, and ensuring proper ventilation.

Additionally, focusing on areas where dust accumulates, like carpets, upholstery, and vents, helps reduce exposure. Incorporating hypoallergenic bedding, reducing pet dander, and managing humidity levels further enhance comfort and air quality.

INTRODUCTION

Indoor allergies are a growing concern for many individuals, with dust, pet dander, mold, and other pollutants being common triggers for allergic reactions. Homes, which should be safe havens, often harbor a variety of allergens that can worsen symptoms such as sneezing, coughing, itchy eyes, and congestion.

Allergy-proofing your home involves creating a living space that minimizes exposure to these irritants. By adopting a systematic approach to cleaning, air filtration, and environmental control, it's possible to significantly reduce allergens, leading to improved air quality and enhanced comfort.

I. What Are Environmental Allergies?



Environmental allergies vs. other allergies

Environmental allergies are an immune response to something in your surroundings that's typically otherwise harmless. Symptoms of environmental allergies vary from person to person but can include sneezing, coughing, and fatigue.

Environmental allergies are somewhat different than food allergies because they're not a reaction to something you've ingested for nutrition. Instead, environmental allergies are a response to triggers you come into contact with in your surroundings or inhale during your day-to-day activities.

Read on to learn more about identifying, treating, and preventing environmental allergies.

Symptoms

The symptoms of environmental allergies can be similar to a cold, but they're not caused by the same thing. A virus causes a cold while allergies are a reaction caused by an immune system response to certain substances in your surroundings.

Some of the symptoms of environmental allergies include:

- sneezing
- runny nose
- shortness of breath
- itching
- headaches
- wheezing
- fatigue

If you have asthma, your symptoms might be severe and even life-threatening.

If you have seasonal allergies, your symptoms might be worse during specific times of the year.

Common environmental allergens

An allergen is anything that causes your immune system to trigger an allergic reaction. Identifying your allergens is an important first step in coming up with a treatment plan. These five environmental allergens are the most common.

Dust mites

Dust mites are one of the most common indoor allergens. They're microscopic bugs that commonly live in furniture and mattresses in your home. If you have a dust mite allergy, your symptoms might be worse in the spring and summer months. That's because dust mites prefer warm and humid environments.

Pollen

Pollen is another common allergen. If you're allergic to pollen, your symptoms of sneezing, watery eyes, or an itchy throat might be worse when pollen increases in the spring and late fall.

Pet dander

Pet dander and pet saliva are common allergens. The symptoms of pet allergies can include:

- sneezing
- itching
- coughing
- hives

You may experience these symptoms if you're around an animal, or if you're in a home or car where an animal's been. You may even have symptoms if a person near you has dander on their clothing.

Mold

Mold spores can cause mild to severe allergic reactions if you have a mold allergy. Symptoms of mold allergy may include:

- coughing
- trouble breathing
- sneezing
- itchy skin

Mold thrives in damp environments, so your symptoms may be worse during months with damp weather. Mold is also commonly found in basements and bathrooms.

How are environmental allergies diagnosed?

If you think you have an environmental allergy, see an allergist. They'll ask you questions about your symptoms and your medical and family history. Using this information along with the results from allergy testing, they can identify specific allergens that may be causing your symptoms.



Allergy tests may include:

- skin prick test
- blood test
- elimination diet, if your doctor suspects you have a food allergen

Allergy tests determine the specific allergens causing your symptoms. Once your doctor has identified your allergens, they can suggest medications and treatment options.

Treatment

After diagnosis, your doctor may recommend medication for treating your allergies. You may find relief using over-the-counter (OTC) medications, such as an antihistamine.

Some of these medications can cause drowsiness. Be sure to read warning labels and talk with your doctor about which OTC medication may be right for you.

Cetirizine (Zyrtec) and loratadine (Claritin) are two common OTC antihistamines that are less likely to cause drowsiness.

OTC antihistamines may be more appropriate for seasonal environmental allergies since you won't have to take them long-term.

If your allergies are severe, your doctor may recommend prescription medications.

You may be a candidate for allergen immunotherapy, also called allergy shots. Allergen immunotherapy involves multiple shots given over the course of a few years. Allergy shots can improve and reduce symptoms for an extended period of time.

Home remedies and prevention tips

Preventing exposure to allergens can be one of the most effective ways to managing your symptoms and creating an allergy-free home. You may also be able to manage or reduce your symptoms with home remedies.

1. Use an air filter

Indoor air filters can improve the quality of indoor air by trapping allergens and pollutants before they enter your home. A 2018 study noted improved indoor air quality after installation of an air purifier equipped with a high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter.

2. Allergy-proof your bed

Allergen-proof pillowcases and mattress covers can also be used to prevent exposure to dust mites. A diligent cleaning routine involving weekly washing of sheets and vacuuming can reduce exposure to allergens as well.

Make sure you wash your bedding in hot water to remove all allergens. Vacuuming your mattress while your bedding's in the wash can also help reduce dust mites and, if you have a pet, dander.

3. Close your windows

Keeping your windows closed can help reduce the number of environmental allergens in your home, especially on days with a high pollen count.

The one part of your house where you should regularly open the windows, if you have them, is in the bathroom. Open windows or turn on a bathroom vent following showers to help remove moisture and prevent mold from growing.

4. Keep pets out of the bedroom

If you have pets, keep them out of your bedroom. Since you spend an extended period of time in your bedroom sleeping, having less allergens there can reduce symptoms. It may also improve your sleep.

Also, bathe your pets regularly to reduce the amount of dander. If your pet goes outside, regular baths can also reduce the risk of them tracking in allergens like pollen.

5. Take a probiotic

Researchers believe ^{Trusted Source} there may be an association between gut bacteria and allergies, including seasonal allergies. In one study, participants who took probiotics reported improved seasonal allergy symptoms compared with those who took a placebo. However, the improvements seen may have been specific to one set of probiotics instead of all probiotics.



II. 10 Common Allergy Triggers

1. Your Overactive Immune System

Many things can trigger an allergic reaction. It happens when your body's defenses attack something that's usually harmless, such as pollen, animal dander, or food. The reaction can range from mild and annoying to sudden and life-threatening.

2. Pollen

It comes from plants such as grasses, trees, and weeds and can trigger hay fever or seasonal allergies. You might sneeze and have a runny or stuffy nose and itchy, watery eyes. Treat these with over-the-counter products, prescription drugs, and allergy shots. To help prevent symptoms, stay inside on windy days when pollen counts are high, close windows, and run the air conditioning.



3. Animal Dander

You love your pet, but if you're allergic, you react to proteins in their saliva or in their skin's oil glands. It might take 2 years for that to start. Luckily, you may still be able to live with them. Make your bedroom a pet-free zone, opt for bare floors and washable rugs instead of carpets, and bathe them regularly. A HEPA filter and allergy shots may help, too.

4. Dust Mites

These tiny bugs live in bedding, mattresses, upholstery, carpets, and curtains. They feed on dead skin cells from people and pets, as well as on pollen, bacteria, and fungi. They thrive in high humidity. To cut down on problems, use hypoallergenic pillows, cover mattresses, pillows, and box springs, and wash sheets weekly in hot water. Keep the house free of dust-collecting items such as stuffed animals, curtains, and carpet.

5. Insect Stings

These could cause swelling and redness that may last a week or more. You might feel sick to your stomach and tired and have a low fever. In rare cases, insect bites trigger a reaction that can be life-threatening, called anaphylaxis. If you're severely allergic, you'll need medicine called epinephrine right away. Your doctor may recommend allergy shots to prevent reactions.

6. Mold

It needs moisture to grow. You can find it in damp places such as basements or bathrooms, as well as in grass or mulch. Since breathing in mold spores can set off an allergic reaction, avoid activities that could trigger symptoms, such as raking leaves. Get air moving in moist areas of your home.

7. Food

Milk, shellfish, eggs, and nuts are among the most common foods that cause allergies. Others include wheat, soy, and fish. Within minutes of eating something you're allergic to, you could have trouble breathing and get hives, vomiting, diarrhea, and swelling around your mouth. If your reaction is severe, you will need emergency medical help.



8. Latex

Found in some disposable gloves, condoms, and medical devices, latex can trigger a reaction ranging from itchy, red skin to anaphylaxis with trouble breathing. Symptoms can include a rash or hives, eye irritation, runny or itchy nose, sneezing, and wheezing. If you're allergic, wear a medical alert bracelet and carry an epinephrine kit if you were prescribed one.

9. Medication

Penicillin, aspirin, and other drugs can cause hives, itchy eyes, stuffiness, and swelling in your face, mouth, and throat. If you're allergic to a drug, it's best to not take it. Your doctor can talk to you about other medicine options or treatments that may allow you to take a medicine if it's necessary.

10. Cockroaches

A protein in their droppings can be a trigger. Roaches can be tough to get rid of, especially in a warm climate or if you live in an apartment building where they can move back and forth between neighbors. Treat them with bug killer, and keep a clean kitchen. Repair cracks and holes in floors, walls, and windows to keep them out of your home.

III. Allergies Going Haywire? Here's How to Create an Allergy-Proof Bedroom

Your bedroom is supposed to be your sanctuary, a place where you can relax, unwind, and watch many hours of Netflix with no judgment. However, that's easier said than done for an allergy sufferer. How is one supposed to feel at peace when they're plagued with incessant sneezing and a ticklish nose?



If your allergies always act up at home, or you frequently wake up with nightmarish sinuses, your bedroom is probably to blame. It's chock-full of the most common indoor allergens, from mold and dander to the collection of dust mites rallying on your bedsheets. Since these dust mites (actually, their excrement) love beds that provide warmth, humidity, and food (i.e., our dead skin cells), our supposed sanctuary is also theirs.

Deep clean your sheets

Allergens live in the folds and creases of your sheets, so deep cleaning your bedding is your first line of defense. "Washing your bedding at least weekly in water that is at least 130°F and using a hot drying cycle is recommended," says Dr. Dlott. "This is the most effective way to remove dirt, sweat, skin cells, oil buildup, and dust mites from your sheets." Note that if you've been cleaning your favorite side-sleeper pillow and noticing an increase in allergy symptoms it's a sign that you should replace it.

Only use hypoallergenic bedding

Speaking of sheets, switching to hypoallergenic bedding can significantly relieve your allergy symptoms by preventing dust mites from reproducing. Materials like organic cotton, wool, bamboo, and microfiber are made of moisture-wicking, antimicrobial materials that are naturally resistant to dust mites and mildew. Down alternative comforters are also less likely to trigger allergies. And the higher thread count the better, since a tight-weave structure eliminates gaps where allergens like to thrive.

But most allergists agree the best hypoallergenic fabric is silk, which not only fights off allergens but also soothes sensitive skin. (Fun fact: Silkworms produce a protein that makes silk resistant to germs, dust mites, and other allergens.)¹ Although it's a bit of an investment, its allergy-proof qualities—plus the long list of hair and skin benefits—could be worth the splurge.

Apply dust-proof covers

To go the extra mile, apply tightly woven covers with zippered encasements on pillows, mattresses, box springs, and other items unable or unlikely to be washed. This will keep dust mites out and prevent them from multiplying on your bed.

Always run an air purifier

The right air filter or circulation system can be a great ally in your fight against allergies. You can either add these directly to your furnace or set up a room unit; look for an air-filtration system that uses a small-particle or HEPA filter, which will help to scrub dust, pollen, and mold spores from the air. The Dyson Pure Cool Purifying Fan is a great option if you want a tower fan that doubles as an air purifier.



Declutter your space

If something traps dust, it will draw dust mites. Try to get rid of anything in your bedroom that can easily collect dust—the less upholstery in the room, the better. This includes stuffed animals, excessive throw pillows, and non-leather chairs. Books collect lots of dust too, so move them to a different room when you're not reading them.

Vacuum regularly

Got carpet? Consider replacing it with hardwood floors if possible. It's also a good idea to remove any rugs from the area (sorry, rug lovers) since they tend to collect a lot of dust. If you can't help having carpet in your bedroom, vacuum with a double micro-filter bag or HEPA filter every other day. For pet owners, look for vacuum cleaners for pet hair.

IV. How to Get Rid of Dust in Your Home



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Dust is inevitable. That's because dust is buildup created by airborne particles of fine, dry matter — pollen, skin flakes, fabric particles, dirt and sand. Just about anything in your home, and outside of it for that matter, can add to the amount of dust in your home. Because of this, it can seem like you can never completely get rid of dust — and that's a problem not only for aesthetic reasons, but also because household invaders like dust mites can cause issues for allergy sufferers, **according to the Asthma and Allergy foundation of America.**

But there are a few things that can help to really cut down on the amount of dust in your home. For starters, keep your windows closed to help prevent pollen and other outdoor pollutants from infiltrating your rooms. To prevent dust, you should also consider placing doormats in front of every entrance and vacuuming often if you have wall-to-wall carpeting, which tends to trap dust. Mattresses can be another hot-spot for dust mites, so make sure yours is in a **mattress protector**, plus it helps to buy bedding and **pillows that can be regularly washed** in hot water.

But this is just the starting point. Because dust is so prevalent, you'll find it in just about every nook and cranny of your home — some harder to reach than others. Here you'll find targeted strategies for getting rid of dust in all areas of your house, plus the best tools for making it happen.

For basic dusting

First, put down the feather duster. No matter what you may have been told, they are far from helpful. "This tool simply spreads dust from one surface to another," Carolyn says. Instead, you can more successfully capture dust with a soft cloth lightly

dampened with water or a furniture dusting spray, a microfiber duster or an electrostatic duster, which use static electricity to pick up more dust particles.

Dusting Essentials



Amazon Basics Microfiber Cleaning Cloths (Pack of 24)



PrettyDate Microfiber Extendable Hand Dusters (Pack of 3)



Swiffer Electrostatic Duster Kit with Handle and Refill Duster

For dusting electronics

Computers, speakers, printers and **TVs are notorious dust magnets**. Always unplug the equipment before cleaning. A gentle swipe with a microfiber cloth usually does the job, while **a soft, long-handled microfiber duster** will collect dust from crevices. Be sure to vacuum dust from around cords and vents because, along with pet hair, it can clog machines or outlets.

How To Clean Your TV Screen



For getting rid of dust on hardwood floors

Vacuum your hardwood floors at least weekly and wet clean them every one to two months (more or less frequently, depending on traffic). For surface-treated floors, spray a small 3-foot by 3-foot area with a **hardwood floor cleaner** like **Bona Hardwood Floor Cleaner Spray** and pick up any dissolved dirt with a **microfiber mop**. Repeat, working in small areas, until the entire floor is clean.

For dusting ceilings, walls and baseboards

For ceiling-to-floor cleaning, a **top-performing vacuum** with multiple attachments is the most efficient tool. Look for a machine that comes with a hose, extension wands and either a small round dusting brush or a bare floor brush, advises Carolyn. It's also helpful to look for a **vacuum with a replaceable or washable HEPA filter**, since these are capable of capturing smaller particles of dust. Alternatively, a dry **Swiffer Sweeper** works just as well, plus is a convenient option, because the cloth is disposable. When dusting walls, work from the top down to capture the most dust without making a mess.

For baseboards, start by vacuuming with the vacuum's round brush to remove dust. Then, tackle dingy spots using a wet cloth. Lightly spray it with water or an all-purpose cleaning solution, like **Lysol All-Purpose Cleaner** and run it over baseboards to whisk debris away in a flash.

More Dusting Essentials



Kenmore Floor Care Elite Upright Bagged Vacuum



Miele Complete C3 Canister Vacuum



Conair Turbo ExtremeSteam Fabric Steamer

For getting rid of dust in carpets

When it comes to carpets, an ounce of prevention goes a long way. Try implementing a no-shoes-in-the-house rule, stashing extra slippers or flip-flops next to the door to help make it easier to adopt this new habit. You can also regularly use a **rechargeable stick vacuum** in your entryway to collect dirt before it makes its way into your carpet. It also helps to place doormats outside your door, so everyone can wipe their feet before they go inside.

For dusting ceiling fans

Turn off the power source, then remove loose dust with an extendable duster or the extension hose on your vacuum cleaner. Alternatively, you can grab a step stool and dust both sides of the blade with a dry microfiber cloth. To capture any remaining fine particles, wet a clean microfiber cloth with a grease-cutting **all-purpose cleaner** and wipe down both sides of the blades once more.

For dusting behind appliances

Over time, crumbs, grease and other debris accumulate behind your stove and refrigerator, providing a food source for insects and other pests. If possible, move the appliance out from the wall and unplug. Then, use your vacuum's crevice tool attachment to remove loose dirt and dust. If any dust remains, you can use a long-

handled, slightly damp **sponge mop** to lift dust from the back of the appliance. To finish, wipe down the floor and the wall with a microfiber cloth and hot sudsy water.

For dusting vents and filters

Remove heavy dust from ceiling, floor or appliance vents with a soft-brush vacuum attachment or **electrostatic mop**, like the Swiffer Sweeper). (You can also use a **long-handled microfiber duster**.) Then, dampen a microfiber cloth and wipe the surface.

And don't forget about your air conditioner filters — whether it's a window unit or a central air system, routine **AC cleaning and maintenance** is key to the performance and longevity of the unit. Always follow your unit's manufacturer cleaning recommendations, but you can usually wash removable foam window air-conditioning filters in hot soapy water, rinse well and air-dry before reinstalling.

For dusting curio cabinets

To get at dust trapped in tiny nooks and intricate carvings, use a clean natural-bristle paint or makeup brush, then wipe with a **microfiber cloth**.

For dusting fabric furniture and soft toys

Use a **garment steamer** on fabric furniture and bean bags, teddy bears or fabric dolls to release odors and kill dust mites near the surface, says Carolyn. Then, vacuum each one with your machine's upholstery or fabric attachment. Some plush toys can also take a spin in the washing machine, but be sure to check the tag before doing so, otherwise you risk damaging the item.

V. Cleaning Tips and Tricks for Long-Lasting Dust Control

Did you know dust exposure is a key trigger for allergy and asthma symptoms? Household dust, dirt, pollen and other allergens can harbour lethal germs, viruses and mould spores that pose health hazards. Therefore, it is imperative to dust your home using proper tools and methods regularly.



Whether you are vulnerable to dust or not, ensure you leverage the benefits of cleaning tricks that deliver long-lasting results. This becomes more crucial when living in a rental property. According to the residential tenancy laws in NSW, tenants are obligated to return the premises reasonably clean. So, focus on dusting, vacuuming and scrubbing tasks for effective results.

Here are some useful cleaning tips and tricks to help achieve long-lasting dust control. This can help you promote a healthy, hygienic and tidy abode all year round.

1. Follow a Daily Cleaning Routine

Due to busy schedules, many working professionals in Sydney clean their homes on weekends. This settles down thick layers of dust and dirt particles on surfaces and pollutes indoor air.

One of the best ways to maintain a dust-free home is regular dusting. Create a daily house cleaning routine and include important tasks to prevent dirt buildup. You can dust walls, shelves, tabletops, mop floors, etc, for best results.

If you are seriously short on time, it is a good idea to set up a 20-minute daily cleaning routine or delegate tasks to other family members to streamline the process. Make sure you wear face masks and keep the windows open if you are an allergy sufferer.

2. Focus on Orderly Cleaning

Dusting or cleaning a home in the right order is crucial. It can save you time and help you cover all nooks and crannies without missing important spots. Experts also follow a top-to-bottom approach for professional end of lease cleaning Sydney to cover every inch of the premises. So, it is good to start by cleaning your walls, vents, light fixtures, and windows and make your way towards vacuuming door tracks, carpets, and floors.

3. Tackle Dust Particles with Microfiber Cloths

Feather duster is the best dusting tool is one of the common cleaning myths. Wiping down surfaces with it can further spread dust and debris. Instead, use microfiber cloths for dusting hard surfaces.

Microfiber cloths are made with ultra-fine synthetic fibres that can catch tiny dust particles without leaving streaks or residue behind. Use a damp cloth to wipe down walls, cabinets, cupboards, light fixtures, countertops, and other dirty surfaces. It is an effective, sustainable, and affordable dusting tool.

4. Use a HEPA-filtered Vacuum For Soft Furnishings and Coverings

This is important for allergy sufferers. To remove embedded dust and debris from surfaces, you invest in a vacuum machine with a HEPA or high-efficiency particulate air filters.



It can effectively trap dirt molecules and pesky contaminants and promote a healthy indoor air. Many end of lease cleaning Sydney experts recommend vacuuming

carpets, upholstery, mattress and other soft surfaces once or twice a week. Stay consistent if you have pets at home.

5. Change your Bed Sheets Once a Week

First of all, make your bed daily to maintain a clean and organised bedroom. Also, wash your dirty bed sheets in hot water every week. This will help kill house dust mites, which feed on dead skin cells.

Tip: Do not forget to wash your comforters, pillows and quilts to achieve long-lasting dust control, especially for allergy sufferers.

6. Deep Clean Air Filters of an HVAC system

This is one of the best ways to reduce allergens in the home. It is good to clean the filters of your HVAC system, which may trap dust, dirt, allergens, and mould spores. You can access the filters using a ladder and remove dust using a vacuum cleaner.

After that, soak the filters in hot, soapy water to remove accumulated and stuck grime. If possible, replace the dirty filters with new ones to promote a healthy and dust-free living environment.

7. Regularly De-clutter Your Home

Piles of clutter in a house can harbour dust and germs. Clutter not only affects work efficiency but also blocks positive energy. So, it is good to regularly de-clutter your rooms, cupboards, kitchen pantry, fridge, and other storage units to prevent dust and dirt buildup.



It is also good to empty the entire house before the arrival of end of lease cleaning Sydney professionals at the end of your tenancy. They can spruce up the entire property more efficiently and help you pass the final rental inspection without any distractions. The best part is that they follow a pre-approved cleaning checklist that covers all important areas and dust-laden surfaces for sparkling results.

Tackling dust particles and airborne allergens requires constant effort. With the help of this guide, you can easily maintain a healthy, dust-free and organised home for a long time.

VI. How To Reduce Allergens And Improve Air Quality In Your Home This Winter

With temperatures dropping, more people are hunkering indoors and spending extra time at home. The extended hours inside can be great for relationships, downtime, and one's mental health; but a lack of fresh air can also mean increased susceptibility to allergens and airborne diseases.

The most common pathogens frequently spread indoors include whooping cough, measles, Covid-19, Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV), the flu, and the common cold.

Polluted indoor air from mold and fungi growth, pet dander, pest allergens, and dust mites can also be bad for anyone prone to allergies. "The air is drier in the winter which means that we are more susceptible to indoor allergens and some allergens are more likely to become and stay airborne for longer as well," says Jeffrey Siegel, a professor of civil and mineral engineering.



The good news is that experts say and research shows that there are some simple steps anyone can take to improve the quality of their indoor air during winter months.

Open a window

The first step, though it might seem obvious, is to crack a window or two. "Homes are typically ventilated by open doors and windows," says Jordan Peccia, a professor of environmental engineering at Yale School of Public Health. "When we close windows in the winter to save on energy, allergens that have indoor sources such as dust mites or pet dander are not removed by ventilation and that can result in greater concentrations (of allergens) indoors."

Have your air ducts cleaned

Another way of improving indoor air quality is to attack contaminants at a common but often overlooked source: the home air duct system. "The purpose of a forced air distribution system is to make sure that heating, cooling, and sometimes ventilation gets to all parts of the home," explains Siegel. "So, when the system is operating, it can also serve to spread allergens or anything else in the air from one space to other spaces."



He explains that the ductwork of newly constructed homes can be especially bad. "When a home is being built, the air duct system is one of the first things put in and during construction each vent opening can fill with dirt, sawdust, debris and even

cigarette butts from the workers," Schweitzer warns. "Usually, none of that is cleared out when the finish work is done and the vent covers are put in place, so the new homeowners end up breathing all that in from the day they move in."

Frequently change the filter of your HVAC system

Similarly, changing one's home furnace and A/C filter as often as recommended is another important step to reduce the spread of allergens, pollutants, and other contaminants. "The best defense is to have a good filter, install it properly so there are no gaps, and change it frequently," Siegel says. "If done well, this will go a long way to reducing the spread of allergens by the system."

And though changing one's HVAC filter will make the biggest difference, the experts stressed the importance of checking other filters around the home as well. For instance, the filters in one's vacuum cleaner, clothes dryer, and appliance vents are also important to clean and switch out from time to time.

"Having the right filter and changing it per the manufacturer's recommendations can make all the difference in preserving good indoor air quality," says Melanie Carver, Chief Mission Officer of the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America.

Keep surfaces clean and tidy

Another important way to cut down on allergens and the spread of airborne viruses is to frequently clean and sanitize surfaces. On its website, The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention notes that in addition to good hygiene, "cleaning and disinfecting surfaces can also reduce the risk of infection."

To reduce the buildup of allergens in addition to infection, Carver recommends "cleaning surfaces and keeping them free of clutter." That's especially important because unkempt areas of the home can lead to rodent or insect infestations - each additional sources of potentially problematic allergens.



While cleaning surfaces in every area of the home is important to eliminate dust particles, Carver says it's best to "focus on your sleeping areas such as bedrooms first and then try to tackle other areas in your home."

Carver also recommends, "washing bedding weekly in warm water and detergent" and to using a "high heat setting" when using the clothes dryer.

And when it comes to cleaning surfaces, don't neglect the furniture. "Floors and carpets tend to be vacuumed much more often than the furnishings, even though people resuspend settled dust from the furniture whenever they sit down," Hildemann explains. "So my advice would be to vacuum the surfaces of your favorite furniture more often as well."

Keep rugs and carpets cleaned, too

Indeed, vacuuming is one of the most important things one can do to keep allergens at bay - but it can also make matters worse for a period of time the allergy-prone should avoid. "Vacuuming stirs up a lot of particles, including allergens," Siegel says. As such, "allergy-sensitive individuals shouldn't be around during or right after vacuuming."

Use cooking vents

Another simple step anyone can take to improve indoor air quality this winter is to use built-in cooling vents in one's appliances. That's because many indoor air pollutants come from one's kitchen, and electric and gas stoves in particular can

release harmful contaminants or pollutants into the home. Indeed, studies show carbon monoxide concentrations are elevated in the home when the stove is used without using the range hood as well.

As such, "carbon monoxide detectors are a must for every home," Manwill advises. "Protect yourself and your family by installing at least one detector on each level of your home."

Utilizing built-in kitchen ventilation systems or opening windows will also cut down on other pollutants when cooking. "Use exhaust fans in your bathrooms and kitchen," suggests Carver.

CONCLUSION

Allergy-proofing your home is a vital step in managing allergic conditions and enhancing overall well-being. By taking proactive measures such as improving cleanliness, using air purifiers, controlling humidity, and addressing potential sources of allergens, it is possible to create a healthier indoor environment. These efforts not only alleviate allergy symptoms but also promote long-term health benefits, providing a more comfortable and sustainable living space. Whether through simple cleaning habits or more comprehensive changes, reducing dust and pollutants can lead to a significant improvement in quality of life for allergy sufferers.

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