

▶ How to deal with allergies

# House dust mites



## Mites: Invisible roommates with allergy potential

**H**ouse dust mites are natural roommates occupying our living quarters. We do not see, hear or feel them, yet they are here. A single gram of dust can contain up to 15,000 house dust mites.

When vacuuming or dusting, the almost invisible roommates and their excrements are swirled around.

Especially these mite faeces contain tiny protein particles

to which 6 to 12 % of all people are allergic.

When breathing in, the allergens automatically enter the airways and trigger excessive defence reactions by our immune system.



## Symptoms of a house dust mite allergy

- ▶ Itchy eyes and nose
- ▶ Urge to sneeze, teary eyes and conjunctivitis
- ▶ Runny nose
- ▶ Coughing and trouble breathing
- ▶ Allergic asthma

**Long running issue:  
House dust mite allergy**

House dust mite allergy typically occurs throughout the year. The symptoms may be stronger or weaker from time to time, but the mucous membranes are always irritated.

Especially in the morning, right before getting up, when making the bed, dusting or when having a pillow fight, the ailments can be severe.

## Mites are where people are

Human dander is the mites' main source of food. They can be predominantly found in areas where people tend to spend lots of time, e.g. in bed. That is where house dust mites feel especially good. The temperatures vary between 20°C and 30°C; due to people sweating at night, humidity is high, and food is plentiful.

Living areas preferred by these arachnids that are about 0.2 to 0.6 mm in size, not only include mattresses, but also pillows, curtains and drapes, carpets and other textiles in the house.

## The following 2 types of house dust mites are encountered the most often



**Dermatophagoides pteronyssinus,**  
about 0.3 mm in size



**Dermatophagoides farinae,**  
about 0.4 mm in size

## Mites in the pantry

Storage mites are invisible roommates in your household. Just like house dust mites, they are not dangerous for those not allergic to them, since they neither sting, nor bite nor transmit diseases.



They prefer living in your pantry items, such as in the kitchen or storage rooms of bakeries, restaurants, cafeterias, etc.

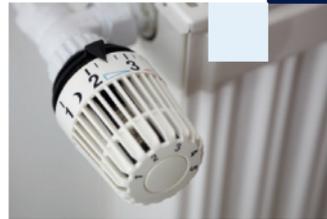
Storage mites are mostly destroyed when processing the foods, but for a person with allergies, the slightest contact with the allergen is enough to trigger an excessive defence reaction. Bakers, cooks and people working in gastronomy are all too familiar with a storage mite allergy.

People farming and those working in horse stables also encounter these invisible roommates. Via straw and hay bales needed for keeping rabbits, hamsters and other rodents, pantry mites reach urban households.

**Sometimes more,  
sometimes less, but  
always present.**

When it starts getting colder outside and heaters and radiators provide comfortable warmth, the allergen load is especially high. Many of the mites that spread especially during the summer months have already died, but they left behind allergy-triggering proteins in the house dust.

The circulation of heat swirls around the dust and transports it throughout the house. For many people suffering from house dust mite allergy, this is the worst part of the year.



While in the spring and summer, the ailments can be tolerated due to the house being aired out and people spending time outside, now the time has come for many sufferers to see a doctor.

- ▶ Do not wait until the ailments have become almost unbearable. Talk with your allergy specialist in a timely manner and inform him or her in detail about your symptoms.
- ▶ Prior to your doctor's visit, write down exactly when and where the ailments occur and also note the form of your ailments. This will help to find the exact diagnosis.

## What do you do if you are allergic to house dust mites?

### Avoid contact with the allergen

House dust mites are omnipresent, which is the reason why you can hardly avoid them. But you can make their lives more difficult. How? – Find out by reading our tips for people suffering from house dust mite allergy.

### Alleviate the ailments

Eye drops and nasal drops or nasal sprays can temporarily alleviate the ailments.

Taking medication alleviating the symptoms and inhibiting inflammation is, however, only a temporary solution. A specific immunotherapy provides long-term help.

### Increase tolerance to allergy triggers

A specific immunotherapy is the only possibility healing an allergy. During the course of treatment, the excessive reaction is gradually decreased to a normal level. A so-called “hyposensitisation” only makes sense however, if it is known what you are allergic to.



#### **Patience is needed.**

A specific immunotherapy is usually a long-term measure taking at least 3 years.

## Tips for people suffering from house dust mite allergy

- ▶ Air out the house often and do not use humidifiers in the living areas.
- ▶ In bedrooms, keep the room temperature as low as possible.
- ▶ Wash bedding at least at 60°C, or better, at 95°C.
- ▶ Use vacuum cleaners with a mite filter for cleaning carpets, upholstery, curtains and drapes on a regular basis.
- ▶ Do not use high-pile carpets, velvet or fur covers.
- ▶ Take a vacation from mites: Accommodations 1,200m above sea level and hotels with special allergy rooms are highly recommended.



## Special tips for children's bedrooms

- ▶ Wash stuffed animals on a regular basis, at least at 60°C, or put them in the freezer for one day.
- ▶ Use covers not letting mites through.
- ▶ Do not use bed drawers in children's bedrooms.
- ▶ Smooth floors suited for daily cleaning with moist cloths are preferred.



**LETI**

## Further information for the patient

### **LETI Pharma**

Home address:

LETI Pharma GmbH

Gutenbergstraße 10

85737 Ismaning

Tel.: (0 89) 121 400-0

Fax: (0 89) 121 400-299

Customer Service:

Tel.: (0 2302) 202 86-0

Fax: (0 2302) 202 86-20

[info-allergie@leti.de](mailto:info-allergie@leti.de)

**[www.allergologie.leti.de](http://www.allergologie.leti.de)**