



How to Avoid House Dust Mites

What are house dust mites?

House dust mites (HDM) are microscopic creatures that are obligate indoor allergens. House dust mite particles are found everywhere indoors in mattresses, pillows, bedsheets, clothes, soft toys, sofas and carpets and can be airborne, mainly in air-conditioned rooms.

Individuals who suffer from asthma, allergic rhinitis, eczema or have a sensitive skin (prone to hives, itchy rashes) are commonly allergic to HDM allergens. The most common dust mites in Singapore are *Dermatophagoides spp* and *Blomia Tropicalis*. The droppings of these HDM may trigger symptoms of allergy.

How will I know if I am allergic to HDM allergens?

The most reliable way to test for allergy is via a skin prick test or blood test, as part of clinical evaluation according to your doctor's recommendation. For more information, please refer to our pamphlet on "Facts on Allergy Tests".

How do I avoid them?

Complete avoidance of HDM is impossible. However, individuals with HDM allergy may experience some improvement when exposure to their trigger allergens is reduced. Some patients with HDM allergy may still experience symptoms even with maximum environmental HDM avoidance and will require medications to control their symptoms adequately.



Simple and effective measures

- + **HDM avoidance measures should be: Pragmatic, Affordable, and Child-friendly.**

As HDM are obligate indoor allergens, having an outdoor lifestyle, such as staying outdoor, keeping windows open, using fans and be restrictive with the use of aircon, could be helpful.

As the bedroom is the main source of HDM exposure for children, it is important to reduce the amount of HDM in the bedroom. There are measures you can institute to decrease the amount of indoor HDM.

These simple measures are:

1. Wash bedsheets and pillowcases in hot water that is at least 60°C (weekly or fortnightly).
2. Avoid beddings such as pillows and comforters that are made of natural materials such as feathers as these are conducive to HDM growth. Replace them with items made from synthetic fibres.
3. Stuffed toys should be limited, and if kept, they should be washed regularly.
4. Avoid thick and heavy curtains in the bedroom that can trap dust.
5. Damp methods should be used to clean surfaces – avoid feather dusters.
6. Air-conditioners should be deep cleaned regularly.
7. Avoid using carpets and rugs in the room.

Other measures

Some other measures that currently lack robust scientific evidence of efficacy but may still be beneficial include usage of:

- HDM-proof mattress and pillow covers
- High-Efficiency Particulate (HEPA) filters
- Vacuum cleaners and air filters



Notes

About the National University Centre for Women and Children

National University Centre for Women and Children (NUWoC) is a national university specialist centre that aims to empower women, children and their families to lead healthier lives. We provide comprehensive medical and surgical services ranging from pre-conception to child and maternal health.

NUWoC comprises the Department of Obstetrics & Gynaecology (O&G) and Khoo Teck Puat – National University Children's Medical Institute (KTP-NUCMI) of National University Hospital. It focuses on the right-siting of appropriate services in the community and builds complementary services in National University Health System's (NUHS) centres of excellence – Ng Teng Fong General Hospital and Alexandra Hospital.

Through a generous gift from the Estate of Khoo Teck Puat, KTP-NUCMI established an integrated outpatient facility with medical, diagnostic and rehabilitation services for children. We are also the only public specialist centre in Singapore that offers paediatric kidney and liver transplant programmes.

For more information about us, visit www.nuh.com.sg/NUWoC

Children's Emergency (24-hr)

Location NUH Main Building, Zone F, Level 1
Contact +65 6772 5000

KTP-NUCMI

Location NUH Main Building, Zone E, Level 2
(Accessible via Kent Ridge Wing, Zone C, Level 2, Lift Lobby C)
Operating Hours 8.30am – 5.30pm (Mon to Fri), 8.30am – 12.30pm (Sat)
General Enquiry +65 6772 5736
Appointment Line +65 6908 2222
Email ktpnucmi_appt@nuhs.edu.sg

9a Viva-University Children's Cancer Centre

Location NUH Medical Centre, Zone B, Level 9
Operating Hours 8am – 5.30pm (Mon to Fri)
Appointment Line +65 6772 5030
Email cbccappt@nuhs.edu.sg

NUH Children's Urgent Care Clinic @ Bukit Panjang

Location Junction 10, #01-22
Operating Hours 9am – 11pm daily (including public holidays)
General Enquiry +65 6219 1538
Email childrenucc@nuhs.edu.sg

NUH Child Development Unit @ JMC

Location Jurong Medical Centre, Level 2
Operating Hours 8.30am – 5.30pm (Mon to Fri)
Appointment Line +65 6665 2530 / 2531
Email cdu@nuhs.edu.sg

NUH Child Development Unit @ Keat Hong

Location Keat Hong Community Club, #03-01
Operating Hours 8.30am – 5.30pm (Mon to Fri)
Appointment Line +65 6769 4537/4637
Email cdu@nuhs.edu.sg

Clinic A22 NUWoC Children's Clinic @ NTFGH

Location Ng Teng Fong General Hospital
Tower A – NTFGH Clinics, Level 2
Operating Hours 8.30am – 5.30pm (Mon to Fri)
Appointment Line +65 6908 2222
Email appointment@nuhs.edu.sg

Our Patient Care Institutions

National University Hospital

Ng Teng Fong General Hospital &
Jurong Community Hospital

Alexandra Hospital

National University Polyclinics

Jurong Medical Centre

National University Cancer Institute, Singapore

National University Heart Centre, Singapore

National University Centre for Oral Health, Singapore

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OneNUHS Hotline: (65) 6908 2222

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