



## **ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL INSTRUCTIONS**

### **FOR PATIENTS WITH ALLERGIES AND/OR ASTHMA**

In order to obtain maximum benefit from the management of respiratory allergies, it is absolutely essential that certain manipulations of environmental factors be undertaken.

### **CONTROL OF HOUSE DUST, DANDERS, AND IRRITANTS**

#### **In the Bedroom**

Use a polyester pillow.

Cover the mattress and box springs with a zippered plastic or rubberized casing. Use washable, synthetic blankets. Avoid fuzzy cotton or wool blankets. Change bed linens, especially pillowcases frequently, as pollen or other allergens may be present on the linens.

Shut and seal the heating vents in the bedroom with aluminum foil and masking tape. Use electric heat if possible for the bedroom. If the rest of the house is heated with forced hot air, change the filter frequently to avoid dust build up.

Open the bedroom window in the winter months. A cold room is preferable for dust sensitive patients and bedroom temperature should be kept at 60 - 65 degrees. House temperature should be kept at 68 -70 degrees F.

Humidity in the bedroom (and the rest of the house) should be kept between 40% and 50%. During the winter, this can be accomplished with a central humidifier attached to the furnace or console humidifiers. Avoid the frequent use of vaporizers (even cold mist) as they may tend to increase the mold content of the room by raising the humidity to 65% or greater. During the summer, a dehumidifier might be needed, especially in the basement. To measure humidity, you can buy a humidistat at a store such as Radio Shack to make sure humidity is kept at the proper level.

Remove stuffed animals, bookcases, soft or bulky toys, and any other dust collectors from the bedroom.

Avoid shag, plush or wool carpeting in the bedroom. If carpeting is desired, a hard finished, rubber-backed, indoor-outdoor carpeting is preferable. Hair type rug padding should never be used. Rubber padding is acceptable, however.

Venetian blinds should be removed from the bedroom. Curtains are permissible if they are polyester or cotton and should be washed frequently.

Clean the room thoroughly twice a week, but not when the child is in the room.

### **In the Home**

If house cleaning is done by the patient who is dust sensitive, a protective mask should be worn such as a 3M mask.

All furry animals (dogs, cats, rabbits, etc.) should be removed from the house and kept outdoors at all times. If this is not possible, at a minimum, they should be kept out of the child's bedroom.

No smoking should be allowed in the house.

Avoid all odors such as hair sprays, perfume, talcum powder, aftershave lotions, odorous cleaners, sawdust, etc.

Keep all clothes in closets with doors shut. Wool clothing, even in closets, should be kept in heavy-duty plastic bags.

Consider using an indoor air filter such as a HEPA air filter.

### **POLLEN CONTROL**

Know your triggers. Tree pollens cause symptoms in early spring, grasses in late spring and early summer, and weeds in late summer and early fall.

Track pollen counts and risk of developing symptoms. This information can be found at many public websites, including [weather.com](http://weather.com).

Stay indoors as much as possible during a pollen season to which you are sensitive.

If possible, the windows should be kept shut during a major pollen season and air conditioning used if available.

Remember that pollens collect on hair, clothing, pets, etc., and are often brought in the house on these items. Wash hands and face or shower to remove pollen at the end of the day of after time spent outdoors.

Avoid rides in the country, hiking, outdoor sports, camping out, etc. during a major pollen season, if sensitive to it.

Do not hang clothes outside to dry when pollen counts are high.

When traveling, keep car windows closed.

## **MOLD CONTROL**

Avoid damp, musty-smelling places such as the basement, cabins that have been closed, seashore motels, cottages, etc.

Remember mold grows on concrete. Avoid sweeping it.

Avoid fallen leaves, indoor plants, and cut weeds and grass.

Avoid foam rubber pillows and extensive use of vaporizers or portable humidifiers.

Mold and mildew should be removed from surface areas. There are many products available for this purpose. Cleaners should contain bleach to be effective. Typical areas involved include shower walls and curtains, basement walls, painted surfaces, vinyl furniture and cushions, etc.

Please remember that the most important aspect in the control of inhalant allergy is avoidance. The difference between success and failure with management of inhalant allergy is often

directly related to the thoroughness in which these measures are carried out!!!