

Maintaining Allergy-Prone Items

Drapes and mini-blinds

Window treatments are real dust collectors. The easiest way to get rid of allergens in drapes and curtains is to simply have them dry cleaned. See our "Drapes and Rugs" section for detailed information.

For mini-blinds, gentle vacuuming with the brush attachment or wiping with a damp rag or Swiffer should remove the dust.

Efficient dusting

Using feather dusters or plain dust rags moves—rather than removes—dust around your home. Use a damp cloth or a product specially designed for maximum dust pickup, such as Swiffer.

Don't wait until you can see the dust to wipe it off. That coffee table you use every day may look clean, but give it a thorough dusting with a cleaning cloth and see how much you pick up.

Fabric care

To kill allergens on furniture, try a specialty fabric spray. Febreze now makes both allergen-reducing and antimicrobial formulas that are safe to use on most upholstery (except leather).

For clothing, take care of dirty, wet items right away—don't give mildew a chance to develop. If it does, take it to a dry cleaner to be cleaned. Washing and drying at home can set mildew stains.

Vacuuming

Nearly 100,000 dust mites can live in 1 square yard of carpet, along with all the other allergens that accumulate on the floor. Weekly vacuuming is essential to keeping carpets clean and allergen-free. Under furniture and in crevices against the wall are especially dust-heavy, so do a really thorough cleaning once a month. Move furniture around to get places you usually can't reach, and use the nozzle attachment to get into corners.

In addition to vacuuming, have area rugs and carpets dry cleaned regularly to kill mites and get rid of their droppings, as well as other fabric pollutants.

A mini-vacuum is a good tool to get the dust out of upholstery. Or use the nozzle attachment of an upright vacuum, making sure to get in-between and under cushions.