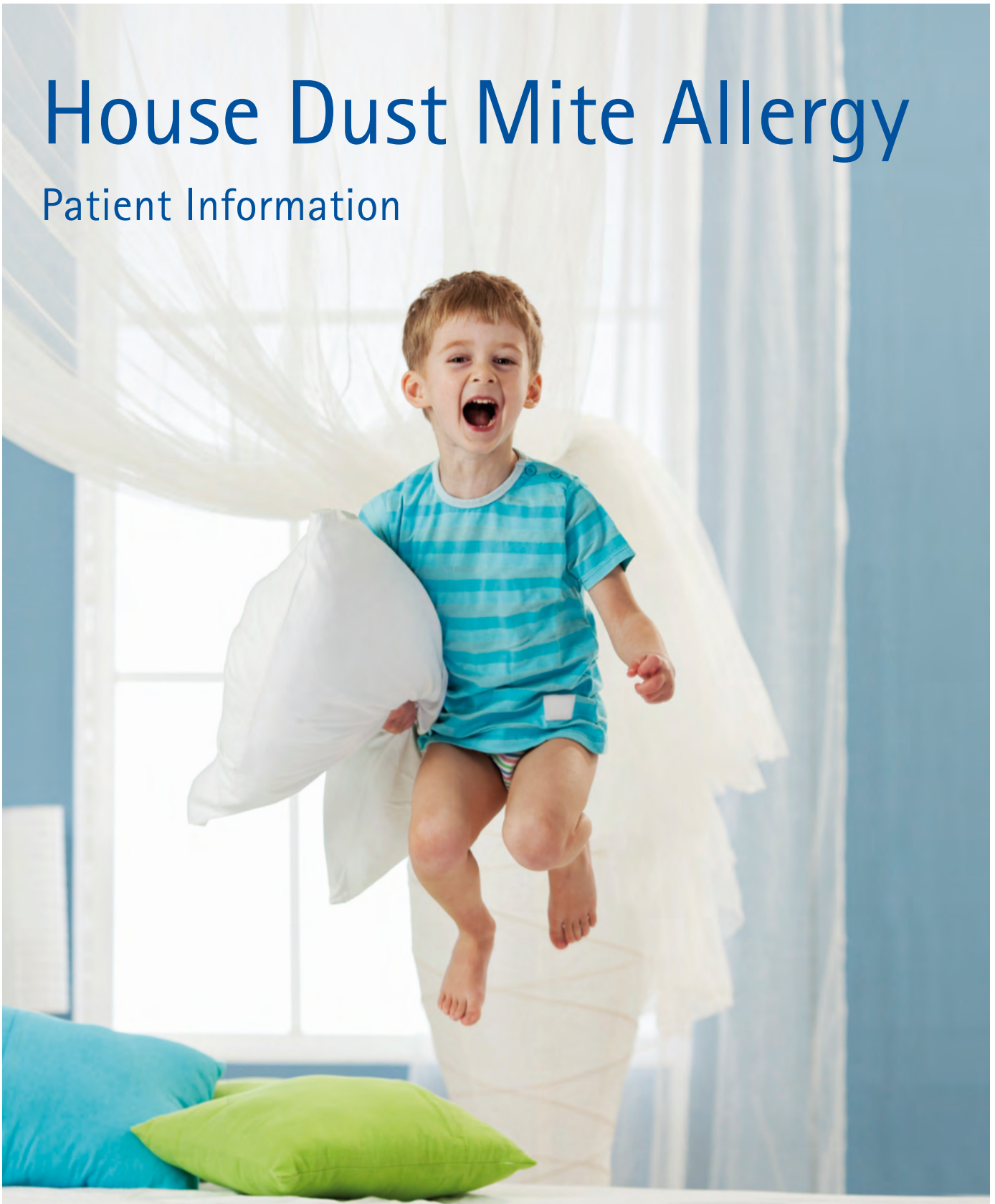


House Dust Mite Allergy

Patient Information



Mite Allergy

Your test results show that you have a house dust mite allergy. An allergy is a condition which manifests as an exaggerated defence reaction of the body to allergens.

Mites are the major source of allergens in house dust. House dust mite allergens belong to the family of so-called inhalation allergens, they may cause the following complaints:

Nose	Sneezing attacks, cold-like symptoms, mucosal swelling (stuffy nose, difficulty breathing) = rhinitis
Eyes	Itching, redness, watering, swelling = conjunctivitis
Airways	Cough, phlegm = bronchitis, acute shortness of breath, asthma
Skin	Itching, skin rash (eczema, nettle rash, neurodermitis)
Head	Migraine

In addition to mites and their excrements, numerous other allergens such as animal hair, moulds, food remnants, textile fibres etc. are also found in house dust and may induce allergies as well. Because these house dust allergens are almost exclusively observed in closed rooms, they are also called "indoor allergens".

House dust mites dwell in almost all types of textiles whenever they find favourable living conditions and are provided with food. Mites prefer to live in an ambient temperature of approximately 25°C and a relative humidity of more than 60%. Their favorite food is dander (both human and animal skin flakes).

Dense mite infestations are generally observed in places where people lie and sit particularly often. Thus, they are primarily found in bedding, but also in carpets, upholstered furniture, curtains, furs, textile wallpapers and even in clothing and stuffed animals. Storage mite contamination occurs in agriculture, the domestic sphere and in feed and food products (hay, straw, animal feed and stored foodstuffs).

In the autumn and winter months (heating, less airing), there are more mites present in the living area. The symptoms of the disease are most marked in the night and in the morning after getting up, because the body had been exposed to the mite allergens for several hours.



Prophylaxis and treatment

1. Prevention (avoidance)

The most important immediate action is the wrapping of mattress, duvet, and pillows with special encasings (i.e. ALLERGOCOVER®), since the greatest amount of house dust mite allergens is found in bedding. Textile items for interior decoration should be avoided, if possible.

Generally, an "anti-mite" climate should be created by frequent airing the rooms and abandoning of humidifiers, particularly in bedrooms.

2. Treatment of complaints (symptomatic therapy)

Depending on the location, type and intensity of the symptoms, appropriate anti-allergic medications (drops, tablets or injections) are given as an acute immediate measure. This eliminates, alleviates or suppresses the symptoms caused by the allergy, but only as long as the medication is being used.

3. Treatment with specific immunotherapy

- The aim of specific immunotherapy (hyposensitization) is to build up the body's allergen tolerance through regular administration of the allergy-inducing substances.
- This treatment is the only means of influencing the immune system, whose reactions have been altered by the allergy. It thus gets to the root cause of the ailment and results in regression/reduction of the symptoms.
- Specific immunotherapy should be initiated as early as possible in the course of the disease.
- Treatment involves preparations (i.e. in the form of injections) which are specifically designed to target the allergens making ill. Therapy is ongoing and takes at least three years.
- Mite allergies should be taken seriously, as the so-called "allergic march" (progression of rhinitis to asthma) may occur during the course of the disease.

Preventive measures and general advices:

Bedding	Covers for mattress, duvet, and pillows with encasings (i.e. ALLERGOCOVER®)
Carpets	Remove if possible
Upholstery	Remove if possible
Stuffed animals	Remove/avoid, or place in freezer for 24 h, then wash
Pet animals	Avoid, or give away, better not to get one
Textiles	Cleaning – brushing – airing, Wash at 60°C (if possible), Store outside the bedroom, Remove curtains if possible
Home	Remove humidity (walls, ceiling, floor)
Food	Dispose when mite contamination is suspected
Humidity	Less than 50% (no humidifier)
Ventilation	Several times a day (in bedrooms in particular)
Temperature	Less than 22°C (bedroom constant at 18°C)
Vacuum-cleaning	Frequently (by an other person)
Indoor plants	Avoid/remove – particularly in bedrooms
Irritants	Avoid smoke, scented cleaning products, fumes etc. Allergy sufferers should abstain from smoking
Holiday	Mite contamination is rare at high altitude areas (1,300 m or more) Ask for special rooms for allergy sufferers

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