



Help for the indoor sneezing season

Sometimes indoor winter air brings a whole new set of allergy and asthma triggers including dust, pet dander, and mold.

Doctors from the American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology offer advice on how to stay sneeze-free and sniffle-free while indoors this winter.

- Reduce moisture in your home to keep dust mites in check. Maintain humidity below 55%, and don't use a humidifier or a vaporizer.
- Filter out dust and other allergens by installing a high efficiency furnace filter with a MERV rating of 11 or 12, and be sure to change it every 3 months.
- Banish allergens from the bedroom (where you spend a third of your life). Keep pets

and their dander out, and encase mattresses and pillows with dust-mite-proof covers. Use blinds instead of curtains.

- Allergy sufferers should wear a NIOSH-rated N95 mask while dusting—a chore that should be done regularly. Wash bedding and stuffed animals in hot water every 14 days and use a vacuum with a HEPA filter.
- Turn on the fan or open the window to reduce mold growth in bathrooms (while bathing) and kitchens (while cooking). Wear latex-free gloves and clean visible mold with a 5% bleach solution and detergent.
- Box up books and knick-knacks and limit the number of indoor plants. When you are buying new furniture, like chairs or sofas, opt for leather or other nonporous surfaces to make cleaning easier.