House Dust Mites

What are house dust mites?

House dust mites are tiny creatures, which live off human skin scales. They are found in bedding, carpets, soft furnishings and clothing. People and animals can become sensitive to various molecules (termed allergens) in the mites, their eggs and faeces, resulting in allergies. Dogs with house dust mite allergies will benefit from measures which reduce the number of mites in the environment.

Tips for controlling house dust mite allergens

- Concentrate your effort on the areas you spend the most time in, I.e., bedrooms and living areas.
- Reduce or stop access to bedrooms
- Use allergen-proof barrier covers on all pet bedding. These should be breathable, completely enclose the bedding and have been tested to ensure they prevent escape of house dust mite allergen
- Wash all bedding not enclosed in barrier covers every week. It's important to do this at 60 degrees or above to kill the mites
- Vacuum regularly with a high-filtration vacuum cleaner
- A high-temperature steam-cleaner will kill mites effectively
- Use spray products marketed to kill mites (many flea sprays will do this); read the instructions carefully before use, especially if there are children or other animals in the house
- Consider switching carpets to flooring, which is washable such as vinyl or linoleum. Some floors are designed to prevent allergen build-up (details at Allergy UK)
- Damp wipe all surfaces each week (remember tops of cupboards)
- Reduce unnecessary soft furnishings
- Stuffed toys should be washed at 60 degrees or placed in the freezer for 12 hours once a month before washing at the recommended temperature
- Increase ventilation; open windows, use trickle vents, turn on extractor fans
- Consider using dehumidifiers to maintain humidity at 30-50 degrees
- 'Allergone' is an environmental spray shown to bind and neutralise the reactive allergens produced by the dust mites. It reduces exposure to house-dust allergens and helps to reduce skin reactions in animals sensitive to dust.