



## **Is your bed making you sick?**

**Did you know that the bed you crawl into each night, the place that's meant to be your refuge at the end of a long day, could be making you and your family sick?**

As the focus turns to allergies during World Allergy Week from 2-8 April, it's time to throw back the covers on a common cause of allergies that thrives in your bed: the dust mite.

Dust mites are microscopic relatives of spiders that graze on the dead skin cells of your family and pets. But just because they don't bite to suck human blood like bed bugs do, doesn't mean dust mites are harmless.

Dust mite droppings contain a protein that when inhaled or touched, causes allergy symptoms such as eczema, sneezing, itchy and runny noses, itchy eyes, and even asthma.

While dust mite waste accumulates everywhere in your home, the highest concentration of this allergen can be found in beds, where warmth, moisture and an endless supply of dead skin cells create the perfect environment for massive mite colonies.

Here's a nightmare-inducing fact: the average mattress harbours anywhere from 100 000 to 10 million mites. And pillows can be even more horrifying: ten percent of the weight of a two-year-old pillow can be dust mites and their droppings, shed skins and carcasses.

If all this gives you sleepless nights, then it's time to take action against your invisible sleeping partners.

### **SOLUTIONS FOR A MITE-FREE SLEEP**

Doctors agree that the first step in managing allergy symptoms is the avoidance of triggers. You can significantly lessen your exposure to dust mites by following these ten tips for a mite-free and allergy-reduced sleep.

1. Since most contact with dust mites occurs in bed, the best way to reduce your exposure is to encase your mattress and pillows with mite-proof protectors. To be mite-proof, a mattress protector must be woven tightly enough to be waterproof, like the [Protect-A-Bed® range](#) of mattress, cot mattress and pillow covers. Made using the waterproof Miracle Membrane™ that forms an impenetrable barrier to dust mites, these covers still allow air transfer for a comfortable night's sleep.
2. Vacuum your mattress once a month to remove mites, unless you've invested in a total mattress encasement like Protect-A-Bed®'s Buglock®Plus, which completely encases the mattress with its impenetrable three-sided zipper system.
3. Wash your mattress protector on a hot wash every four to six weeks to remove absorbed perspiration and skin scales. Wash bed linen every week in a 60-degree wash. Wash duvet inners and pillows once a month. (If you use pillow protectors, you need only wash your pillows once a year.)
4. Soft toys that share the bed should be washed in hot water each week. Toys that can't withstand hot washing can be put into the freezer for 24 hours before being cold washed to remove dust.

5. Embrace your inner slob. Kill mites by leaving your duvet open to dry out before you make the bed.
6. Synthetic pillow and duvet fillings are less hospitable to dust mites than feather and down.
7. Vacuum bedroom carpets and the bed base frequently, preferably using a vacuum cleaner with a good HEPA filter.
8. In severe cases of allergy, replace carpets with hard flooring, and curtains with blinds. Mop floors daily, and wipe down blinds.
9. Don't forget to wash pet bedding, since dust mites can also cause allergies in pets.

To buy any products in the Protect-A-Bed range, please visit [www.protectabed.co.za](http://www.protectabed.co.za) and click on the "Buy Now" button.

