

NORTH KITSAP EAR, NOSE AND THROAT
KITSAP ALLERGY CARE
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AVOIDANCE STRATEGIES TO HELP MINIMIZE ALLERGIES

ANIMAL DANDER - Animal dander can be found both on animals and anything the animal touches. Animal danders are small, light particles that stay airborne even longer than pollens. Cat dander is a very potent allergen and remains in the environment for six (6) months or longer, even after the cat has been removed from the environment. Cat dander can be transferred from family members and co-workers because it lasts so long and transfers easily. If you are allergic to animals, it is best not to have them in your home. If this is not possible, keep the animal out of your bedroom. Bathe your pet regularly and wash your hands after playing with the pet. Do not rub your eyes or nose until your hands have been washed.

DUST MITES - Dust mites are microscopic insects that live on the dead skin cells that are shed by humans and animals. Dust in general can come from the degenerated residue of upholstery, carpets, mattresses and bedding. Dust mites thrive when the humidity is more than 50%, at lower altitudes, and at temperatures from 65° - 84° F. It is impossible to completely eliminate house dust, but there are a few steps you can do to help reduce the amount.

- Wash bedding in hot water once a week. Dry completely. **IMPORTANT ... Temperature must be at least 140°**
- Use dust proof covers on pillows and mattresses.
- Vacuum carpets and furniture every week.
- Choose washable stuffed toys. Wash stuffed toys in hot water and dry completely before re-using.
- Dust often with a damp cloth.
- Vacuum carpet and fabric-covered furniture to reduce dust build-up using a high efficiency (HEPA) filter. People with asthma or allergies should leave the area being vacuumed.
- Pets with fur or feathers contribute to the dander in the dust and increase food source for mites. If you are a pet lover, locate their sleeping quarters as far from yours as possible and furnish their sleeping area so it can be cleaned easily. Hardwood or vinyl floors with washable area rugs are ideal.

POLLENS - Trees pollinate primarily in the spring, while grasses pollinate in the early summer. Weeds tend to pollinate in the late summer and fall. It is useful to investigate the types of trees and plants around your house. In general, pollen counts are higher on hot, dry, windy days. Pollen counts decrease during rain, increase after rain and high shortly after release (early dawn to about 10 am). Try to remain indoors during these hours and keep windows and doors closed. If you are outside during these times, change your clothes and shower immediately upon returning indoors. Trees pollinate in late winter and spring that can trigger allergies: Ash, beech, birch, cedar, cottonwood, box, elder, elm, hickory, maple and oak. Grasses pollinate in late spring and summer that can trigger allergies: Kentucky bluegrass, timothy, johnson, bermuda, redbud, orchard, rye, and sweet vernal grasses.

MOLDS - Molds or fungi are organisms that thrive on decaying organic matter. They are present year-round, indoors and outdoors, especially during the spring and fall. Outdoor mold spores reach their peak level in the early evening as the sun sets, so try and avoid outdoor activities or watering the lawn during these times. A freshly cut lawn, stagnant water, heavy vegetation or decaying vegetation around the house is all significant sources of mold. Indoor molds grow in warm, dark, moist places such as basements, bathrooms, poorly vented laundry rooms, under sinks, in drain pans under the refrigerator, in piles of paper, stacks of old books, bird cage droppings, firewood and indoor plants. Visible mold and mildew should be cleaned with a dilute solution of bleach (one part bleach to 10 parts water) or a commercially available brand.

Several ways to help reduce mold in and around the home are:

- Put an exhaust fan or open a window in the bathroom / laundry room
- Quickly repair any plumbing leaks
- Scour sinks and tubs at least once monthly
- Clean garbage pails frequently
- Clean refrigerator door gaskets and drip pans frequently
- Use an electric dehumidifier to remove moisture from the basement. Be sure to drain and clean the dehumidifier regularly
- Throw away or recycle old books, newspapers, magazines, and clothing
- Promote ground water drainage away from the house. Shaded homes dry out slowly, which promotes dampness
- Check foods stored in the refrigerator for signs of spoilage

Alternaria – Frequently grows in textiles, foodstuffs, and soils. These are usually the black spots seen on tomatoes. Frequently found on condensed window frames. (grey, dark green, brown to black).

Hormodendrum – Usually associated with plants, wood products, and leather goods.

Aspergillus – Found in soils, leaf, and plant litter, decaying vegetable and roots, bird droppings and tobacco.

Penicillium – found in the soil of citrus plantations. Found in decaying cabbage and barley plants, stored seeds of cereals, grapes, nuts, dried fruits, and fruit juices. Grows readily on fruits, breads, cheeses, and other foods. Frequently found in wine cellars. Velvety colony which has a blue green center with pale to bright yellow.

Helminthosporium – found on cereal grain plants such as corn, rye, wheat, and oats. Frequently found on grains, grasses, sugar cane, soil, and textiles. Causes small, black sunken spots on apple and pear fruit (black pox) as well as blister canker on pear.

Fusarium – Found on numerous grasses and other plants. Occurs regularly on banana roots and other fruits and vegetables, e.g., tomato and watermelon.

Pullularia – Often found on dead and decaying leaves, wooden frames, saunas, refrigerator doors and in the kitchen and bathroom. Also found on wheat seeds, barley, oats, tomato, and pecans. This mold is found on caulking in the shower or damp window frames in the bathroom. (Grey)

Cephalosporium – Found in decomposing vegetation. Soil inhabitant. Also found from textile plants, soil when gardening, bathrooms, and damp old houses. (grey/green)