

Keeping A Clean Home Can Help With Winter Allergies

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DENVER — Even though freezing temperatures bring an end to seasonal pollen allergies, millions of people suffer from indoor allergies because of the time spent indoors during cool weather. A home can actually contribute to sickness. Some common symptoms of indoor, winter allergies are sneezing, runny or stuffy nose, coughing, postnasal drip, and itchy eyes, nose and throat.

Dr. Mike Van Dyke offers the following tips for keeping your home free of wintertime allergens and irritants.

Clean regularly. There is no widely recognized guideline for how often you should dust and vacuum your home, a solid cleaning once a week should help keep dust and allergen levels down. Use a damp mop for cleaning hard floors to avoid stirring up dust.

Avoid exposure. If you are the one that is suffering during the winter months, have someone else in your house do the dusting and vacuuming. When you vacuum and dust you kick off the allergens up in the air and can be affected if you're around. If you can, leave the house while the cleaning is being done.

Crack a window. You may find it helps to open a window or door on warmer days. Especially try to air out your house right after cleaning so the allergens and dust you've kicked up have a place to escape.

Watch out for mold. Mold can be an irritant for some people, so be on the lookout for moisture. Good insulation can help cut down on mold by reducing condensation on cold surfaces, and drying wet surfaces can keep mold from growing. Also, make sure you use your bathroom ventilation fan if you have one or crack a window while showering to let the moisture escape. If you have mold, clean it up using soap and water, and then follow up with a diluted bleach mixture.

Beware of gas ranges. Using gas stoves and cooktops releases nitrogen oxides into the air. These nitrogen oxides can irritate the lungs of individuals with asthma or other lung health issues. If you have a gas stove, make sure you use the ventilation hood in your kitchen or crack a window while cooking.

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Media Contacts

Our team is available to arrange interviews, discuss events and story ideas.

William Allstetter
303.398.1002
allstetterw@njhealth.org

Adam Dormuth
303.398.1082
dormutha@njhealth.org