

## General Avoidance Advice

Allergen avoidance is difficult for people with allergy to substances in the air, such as pollen. For example, tiny pollen spores are windborne and travel for miles on air currents. It can be easier to avoid allergens due to pets and house dust mite, but evidence suggests that it is probably necessary to rigorously carry out several allergen avoidance measures in order to see an improvement in symptoms. Just doing one or two things half-heartedly may not make any difference.

Remember that:

- ▶ Allergic inflammation and symptoms develop over a long time so benefit may not be immediate.
- ▶ Cigarette smoke makes all allergic conditions worse because of the aggravation of already inflamed skin and membranes. Nobody should smoke in the house of an allergy sufferer.
- ▶ Early exposure of babies to allergens and smoke is associated with later development of allergic disease.
- ▶ People with sensitive airways and skin should avoid all unnecessary chemicals, such as air fresheners and most commercial cleaning materials (contact Allergy UK for cleaning tips).
- ▶ Allergy test results should be interpreted by an allergy expert in conjunction with clinical history. Diagnosis by alternative methods is not recommended.

*Last updated: March 2012*

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