



VALLEY ENT

EAR, NOSE, THROAT & ALLERGY



This resource guide will educate you on:

- Where allergens may be found in everyday items
- How to reduce allergens in your home
- Common environmental offenders
- What foods cross-react with certain allergens so that you can avoid them

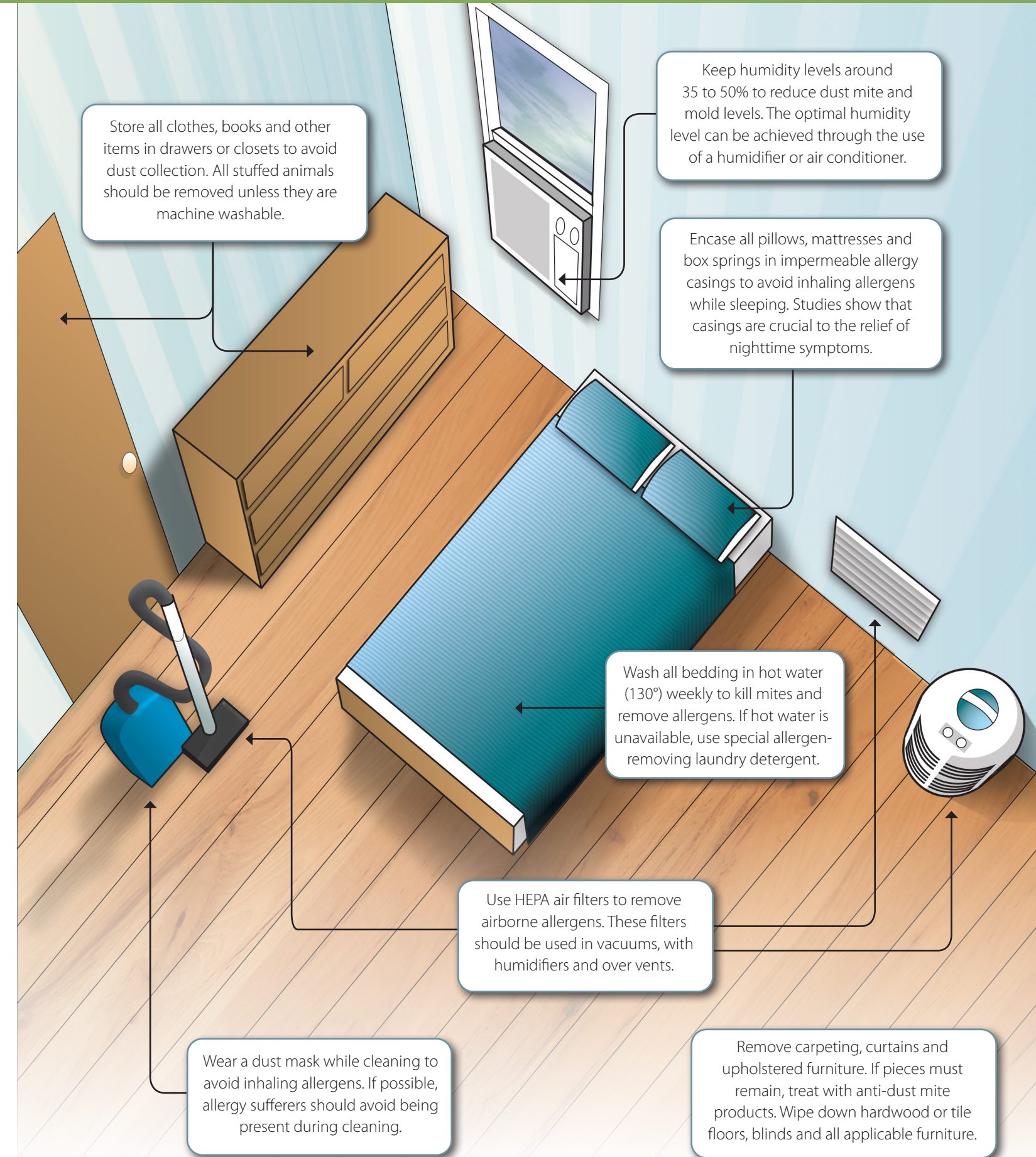
Avoiding allergens you are sensitive to is important, but the only way to effectively desensitize your body to these allergens is by immunotherapy administration.

Immunotherapy is a serum made up of the allergens you are sensitive to. Immunotherapy is administered through shots or sublingually. The dose increases gradually to desensitize your allergen sensitivity safely.



COMMON ENVIRONMENTAL OFFENDERS

Dust mites	Found on furniture, mattresses, houseplants and knickknacks in the home.
Pollen	Comes into the home through open windows/doors, and animals that carry pollen into the house.
Pet Dander and Saliva	Can be found on furniture, clothes, carpets and anywhere an animal has been in the home.
Molds	Commonly found in basements, bathrooms and houseplants.
Insect Stings	These five types of insects cause the most serious reactions: yellow jackets, honeybees, paper wasps, hornets and fire ants.
Latex	Rubber gloves, condoms, balloons, rubber bands, erasers and toys.
Food	The most common foods that cause allergic reactions are cow's milk, eggs, fish, peanuts, shellfish, soy, tree nuts and wheat.
Medications/Drugs	The most common drugs people are allergic to are antibiotics (penicillin), aspirin/ibuprofen, anticonvulsants, monoclonal antibody therapy and chemotherapy.



DUST AND DUST MITES



Dust mites are microscopic, spider-like insects that are commonly found in every home. They increase in numbers when humidity is high (60 to 75%). They thrive in items like pillows, mattresses, box springs, bedding, rugs/carpet, upholstered furniture and stuffed toys.

Tips to reduce and manage dust mites in your home:

- Enclose mattresses, box springs and pillows in allergen-proof covers.
- Wash bedding and mattress pads weekly in hot water that is at least 130° to kill dust mites and allergens.
- Avoid using fans in the bedroom (including ceiling fans).
- Do not store anything under the bed. Eliminate anything that collects dust like magazines, stuffed toys, curtains, knickknacks, etc.
- Remove carpet and replace it with tile, linoleum or wood flooring. If you cannot remove the carpet, vacuum rugs and furniture thoroughly at least once a week. Change vacuum cleaner bags frequently. If possible, use a HEPA filter on your vacuum.
- Install HEPA filters to your central heating/air conditioning filters. Clean the filters monthly.

POLLEN (TREES, GRASSES, WEEDS)



Pollen is the male fertilizing agent of flowering plants, such as trees, grasses and weeds.

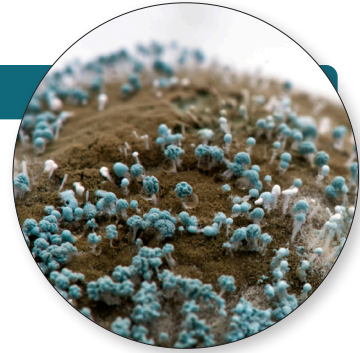
Pollen allergies are usually seasonal. Each spring, summer and fall, plants release tiny pollen grains to fertilize other plants of the same species. Most pollens that cause allergic reactions come from trees, weeds and grass. Wind transports these pollens into the home through open windows and doors.

Tips to reduce pollen reactions:

- Limit your outdoor activities when pollen counts are high.
- Keep windows closed during pollen season and use central air conditioning with an allergy filter attachment.
- Start taking your allergy medication prior to the pollen season starting.
- Shower daily before going to bed.
- Wear sunglasses and hats when outside.
- Change clothes when you come home after being outside during the pollen season.

Pollen seasons:	Trees:	February–July
	Grasses:	May–September
	Weeds:	July–October

MOLDS



Molds are tiny fungi whose spores float through the air. They like damp environments and need these four things to grow.

- Food, air, appropriate temperature and water

Molds can be found in the following places:

- Damp basements, bathrooms, cabinets under sinks, dead leaves in the yard, uncut grass, spoiled food, garbage containers, shower curtains, cool mist vaporizers, humidifiers, windowsills and soiled upholstery

It is important to maintain proper humidity levels (40 to 50%) to control mold growth in your home.

Tips to control mold:

- Use dehumidifiers or exhaust fans to reduce the humidity in your home.
- Dry, cool air and sunlight can reduce mold growth.
- Avoid leaving damp clothes in the washing machine. Add Borax to your laundry to reduce mold growth.
- Keep bathroom walls dry after showering.
- Sprinkle Borax in damp areas.
- Use a solution of chlorine bleach and water (¾ cup chlorine bleach to 1 gallon of water) to clean up mold in your home.
- Run a cup of vinegar through a regular cycle on your dishwasher every four to six weeks.
- Wear a face mask when doing yardwork. Avoid raking damp leaves.

PETS (EPIDERMAL)

About 62% of U.S. households have pets, and about 161 million of these pets are cats and dogs. Unfortunately, millions of these pet owners are allergic to their pets.²

The proteins found in pet dander, urine, saliva and skin flakes cause allergic reactions. The pet's hair/fur can collect pollen, mold spores and other outdoor allergens and bring those allergens inside your home.

There are no truly "hypoallergenic breeds" of cats or dogs. The animal's length of hair/fur or the amount of shedding does not affect the allergic danger of cats and dogs.



Managing pet allergies

- Avoid the allergen causing the symptoms (cat or dog). Try not to hold, pet or kiss your animals.
- Keep the pets out of the bedroom and off upholstered furniture.
- Have someone who is not allergic brush the animals outside regularly.
- Take over-the-counter antihistamines to help relieve the symptoms (not ideal for long-term treatment).
- Start immunotherapy (this is a proven treatment plan for long-term treatment).
- Use a double- or micro-filter bag in your vacuum. It is best to remove carpet and rugs from the house.
- Use HEPA air cleaners to help remove allergen particles from the air.

² American Academy of Allergy Asthma & Immunology. (n.d.). Pet Allergy. <https://www.aaaai.org/conditions-treatments/allergies/pet-allergy>

ELIMINATION DIET

An elimination diet, sometimes called a rotation diet, is used to help control your food allergies or sensitivities. You will eat biologically related foods on the same day, then wait at least four days before eating them again. This process may prevent you from developing new food allergies.

There are two phases to an elimination diet—the elimination phase and the reintroduction phase. During the elimination phase, you stop eating the foods you are allergic or sensitive to, which may include: citrus, milk, eggs, shellfish, soy, wheat and gluten (rye, barley and malt vinegar).

Additives are also known to trigger allergy symptoms in some people. You may consider avoiding:

- Fermented or aged foods, citrus and nuts (histamine, tyramine and phenylethylamine)
- Sports supplements (octopamine)
- Artificial food colors
- Artificial sweeteners (aspartame)
- Preservatives (butylated hydroxyanisole, butylated hydroxytoluene, nitrates, nitrites, sulfites, benzoates and sorbates)

- Lactose and sugar (disaccharides)
- Flavor enhancer (monosodium glutamate)
- Thickeners or stabilizers (tragacanth or agar-agar)

During the reintroduction, sometimes called ‘the challenge’ phase, you’ll begin to add back the foods you eliminated in phase one. One at a time, introduce the eliminated food back into your diet. Keep a journal of any symptoms you experience. Repeat this process for each food that you cut out. Once you have a shorter list of foods causing you issues, repeat the process starting with phase one. This will allow you to see if your symptoms are gone for good and know which foods you are better off avoiding.

NOTE: Please seek emergency medical help if you experience swelling of the lips, tongue, face or throat, tingling in the mouth, immediate rash or hives or trouble breathing (anaphylaxis).



FOODS TO WATCH

Processed and prepackaged foods, such as those on the list below, often contain few nutrients, excessive calories and an abundance of less-than-desirable ingredients.

Popcorn	Nuts	Peanut Butter	Corn Chips	Potato Chips	Chocolate	Soda	Kool-Aid
Jell-O	Popsicles	Spices	Herbs	Mustard	Ketchup	Pizza	Spaghetti Sauce
Lunch Meat	Hot Dogs	Gum	Candy	Snack Wafers			

These foods are acceptable if eaten on occasion; however, if these foods make up the bulk of your diet, they should be completely eliminated. You should eat fresh fruits and vegetables, properly prepared meals and other nutritious food to remain healthy!

PROVEN CROSS-REACTING FOODS

Cross-reactivity is when the proteins in one substance (allergen) are similar to the proteins found in another substance (typically food). Some symptoms that indicate a cross-reaction due to food are itching mouth and throat, swelling of the mouth, tongue, lips and eyelids, hoarseness, numbness or digestion problems.

Season	Allergen	Food and spices
Spring	Birch pollen	Apples, apricots, cherries, peaches, pears, plums, kiwis, carrots, celery, peanuts, soybeans, almonds, hazelnuts, raw potatoes, anise, caraway seed, coriander, fennel and parsley
Spring	Alder pollen	Celery, pears, apples, almonds, cherries, hazelnuts, peaches and parsley
Summer	Grasses	Peaches, watermelon, oranges, tomatoes, white potatoes, legumes and grains
Late Summer–Fall	Ragweed	Cantaloupe, honeydew, watermelon, banana, cucumber, white potatoes, zucchini, dandelions and chamomile tea
Fall	Mugwort	Bell pepper, broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, celery, apples, kiwis, peanuts, carrots, chard, garlic, onion, parsley, aniseed, caraway, coriander, fennel and black pepper
Year-round	Latex	Bananas, avocado, kiwis, chestnuts and papaya
Year-round	Mold	Cheese, yogurt, yeast, mushrooms, vinegar products, condiments and alcoholic beverages, etc.

ALLERGY TREATMENT - OVERVIEW

Allergen immunotherapy (allergy shots) is a form of long-term treatment that decreases sensitivity to allergens and often leads to long-lasting relief even after you stop immunotherapy treatment. Immunotherapy also may help prevent the development of asthma and new allergies.

Allergy shots work just like a vaccine. Your body is injected with the allergens you are allergic to in small amounts. Then the doses increase gradually each time you come in for an allergy shot.

There are two phases in immunotherapy:

- **Buildup phase**—You will receive injections with increasing amounts of antigens. The length of this phase depends on how often you are receiving your allergy shots.
- **Maintenance phase**—This phase begins once you have reached the effective dose. During this phase, there will be longer periods of time between each treatment.

You may notice a decrease in symptoms during the buildup phase, but it can take up to 12 months to see a further decrease in symptoms during the maintenance phase.

SUCCESSFUL ALLERGY TREATMENT REQUIRES A MINIMUM THREE- TO FIVE-YEAR COMMITMENT.





About Valley ENT & Allergy

Central California's abundant agriculture is one of the wonderful perks of living here. What's not so wonderful? The allergens that come with it! If you sneeze every year in September during the walnut harvest or your eyes get red and itchy in February when the apricot blossoms bloom, you could have seasonal allergies like many of your Central California neighbors.

At Valley ENT, we offer comprehensive allergy testing services right in our office. Thorough testing allows our caring team to pinpoint the specific allergens that cause your unwanted symptoms. Based on your results, our expert providers will partner with you to develop a strategy to manage your allergies and help you find relief. While some patients respond well to a regimen of nasal rinses, effective medication and nasal sprays, others may require traditional immunotherapy (allergy shots) and sublingual immunotherapy (under the tongue, no needle necessary). Immunotherapy in either form is highly effective.

Allergy testing is available to patients of all ages, from children to seniors.



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If you have any questions,
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