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HOME FEVER IS THE NEW HAY FEVER

Allergy UK reveals millions are allergic to their own homes

Allergy UK predicts at least 12 million peopleⁱ are allergic to their own home.

An out of season hay fever, dubbed as **'home fever'**, (Perennial Allergic Rhinitis) by **Allergy UK** is on the increase with more and more sufferers coming forward.

Research by Allergy UK found 58%ⁱⁱ of allergy sufferers react to house dust mites. Closing doors and windows and turning the heating up creates a breeding ground for these microscopic creatures.

But it's not just dust that causes problems; 31% of sufferers are allergic to mould, and 45% of sufferers say their allergy is triggered by pets. On top of that the chemicals in cleaning products cause a reaction in over 30% of sufferers.

With the most common symptoms of an indoor allergy or **'home fever'** being a runny nose and sneezing, people all too often confuse allergy symptoms with a common cold or flu and therefore, don't treat the cause of the problem.

The research by **Allergy UK** revealed that people aren't doing enough to reduce the house dust mite allergen. The amount of sufferers is set to worsen if the nation doesn't take action.

59% of indoor allergy sufferers said their symptoms are worse in the bedroom. Not surprising when you consider the average bed harbours two million house dust mites and the average pillow doubles in weight over a period of six months due to dust mite faeces.

While there is no 'cure' for **'home fever'**, Lindsey McManus from **Allergy UK** recommends these top tips to manage symptoms and reduce the amount of indoor allergens in the home:

- Dust regularly but use a damp duster first, then a dry cloth. Otherwise, you are just moving the dust around
- Remove all carpeting from concrete floors. Such floors trap moisture allowing dust mites and mould spores to thrive. Seal the floor with a vapour barrier, and then cover it with a washable surface such as vinyl or linoleum. There are certain types of flooring designed to prevent allergen build up (details of suitable floorings are available from the **Allergy UK** website)
- Wash bedding once a week at 60°C or higher to remove house dust mites. **Allergy UK's** research revealed 16% of people wash bed linen every three weeks or less. And with 58% washing bedding at 30 or 40 degrees, house dust mites are set to stay
- Regularly steam clean carpets and curtains
- Use allergen-proof barrier covers on mattresses, duvets and pillows
- Replace your mattress every 8-10 years. The research found 13% have had their current mattress for 11 years or more, where as 3% have kept theirs for 20 years
- Buy new pillows every year - don't wait five years or more like the 25% of allergy sufferers out there
- Use an air purifier to help remove and reduce allergens such as pollen, house dust mite debris and mould spores



- Buy products that have been tested to ensure they prevent the escape of the house dust mite allergen. Look for the **Allergy UK Seal of Approval™**
- If you think you might be suffering from an indoor allergy, call **Allergy UK's** helpline to speak to a trained allergy advisor or visit www.allergyuk.org

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Notes to editors:

About Allergy UK

Allergy UK is the operational name of the British Allergy Foundation; the leading national medical charity providing advice, information and support to people with allergies, food intolerance and chemical sensitivity. Allergy UK acts as the 'voice' of allergy sufferers, representing the views and needs of those affected by this multi organ disease.

Allergy UK makes a difference by:

- Promoting wellbeing for people with allergy, food intolerance and chemical sensitivity by providing information and support through our dedicated helpline
- Empowering people with allergy, food intolerance, and chemical sensitivity to manage their symptoms
- Enabling people with allergy, food intolerance, and chemical sensitivity to receive appropriate diagnosis and treatment through education of healthcare professionals and the provision of dedicated services
- Educating corporate bodies in the need for products suitable for allergy, food intolerance and chemical sensitivity sufferers
Conducting ongoing medical and social research into the causes and impact of allergy, food intolerance and chemical sensitivity, and producing reports enabling us to lobby for better allergy services for sufferers

ⁱ Based on 58% of allergy sufferers reacting to house dust mite and there being 21 million allergy sufferers in the UK according to Mintel Report Allergies and Allergy Remedies, Market Intelligence, February 2010

ⁱⁱ Research conducted by Allergy UK, October 2011. Base sample of 1,610 allergy sufferers