How should you manage chronic symptoms caused by HDM allergy?

Firstly, reduce exposure to HDM by taking measures that are simplest and cheapest: air the bedroom by opening the windows during the day, air the bedding, damp wipe surfaces.

Secondly, use either a non-sedating antihistamine (such as cetirizine or loratadine), or a nasal steroid spray. Some patients get more benefit from taking both together. These may need to be used regularly for a long time.

If nasal symptoms persist, your doctor may recommend additional treatment with montelukast, particularly if you have asthma.

Is there a cure?

Antihistamines and nasal steroid sprays do not cure the allergy. They treat the symptoms.

If you are taking your treatment regularly and you still have troublesome symptoms, desensitisation (immunotherapy) may be offered by specialist children's allergy centres. Immunotherapy may reduce symptoms but does not completely cure the allergy. The programme of treatment is three years long and may not be suitable for all patients.

Is HDM allergy life long?

Most children with HDM allergy will not outgrow the problem. However, the allergy can be helped by lifestyle changes and use of medication.

How can I contact you for advice?

References:
1.Nurmatov U et al. House dust mite avoidance measures for perennial allergic rhinitis. . . . *Allergy* 2011.
2. Zuiani & Custovic. Update on House Dust Mite Allergen Avoidance Measures for Asthma. *Curr Allergy Asthma Rep* 2020.
3. Scadding G, et al. BSACI guideline for the diagnosis and management of allergic and non-allergic rhinitis. *Clin Exp Allergy* 2017.

NHS
North West Paediatric Allergy Network

House Dust Mite allergy

Information for parents and carers

www.allergynorthwest.nhs.uk

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This information should be used in conjunction with advice from a medical professional.

How common is house dust mite allergy?

One in 20 children and one in five adults will test positive for house dust mite (HDM), although not all will have symptoms. One in three children with eczema and asthma will test positive to HDM.

What are the symptoms of house dust mite allergy?

HDM allergy commonly causes symptoms all year-round. Symptoms include sneezing, runny nose, coughing, itchy, red, watery eyes. HDM can also trigger asthma and eczema. It is not usually associated with life-threatening allergies.

What causes house dust mite allergy?



HDM allergy is caused by tiny creatures that are distantly related to spiders! They thrive in warm damp conditions and feed on shed skin. They are found in all homes no matter how clean. Allergy is caused by small participles of HDM faeces, the size of pollen grains. It is therefore not surprising that mite allergy and pollen allergy cause similar symptoms.

Will my child also be allergic to other things?

Four out of five patients with HDM allergy are also allergic to pollen or animal dander.

How do we diagnose house dust mite allergy?

Skin prick tests or a blood test can show if you have allergy antibodies to house dust mites.

How can we avoid house dust mite?

It is not possible to completely remove HDM from your home. Focus your efforts on the bedroom and living room where you or your child spend the most time. Avoid damp and dusty places.

Your bed (mattress and pillowcase) is the perfect breeding ground. HDM can also be found in large numbers in soft furnishings, carpets, curtains, clothes and fluffy toys.

The following can reduce the amount of HDM in your home:

- Dust surfaces weekly with a damp cloth and vacuum weekly using a vacuum cleaner that has a high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter. The person with HDM allergy should not be in the room when cleaning is done, as high levels of dust in the air occur during cleaning.
- Air the room by opening the windows.
- Do not sleep on the lower bunk bed.
- Remove clutter, soft toys, and carpets in the bedroom.
- Wash bedding and covers regularly at 60°C to kill dust mite.
- Put soft toys that cannot be washed at 60°C in the freezer first (for 12 hours).
- If carpets are old and need replacing, consider wood flooring which is easier to clean.

References:
1.Nurmatov U et al. House dust mite avoidance measures for perennial allergic rhinitis. . . . *Allergy* 2011.
2. Zuiani & Custovic. Update on House Dust Mite Allergen Avoidance Measures for Asthma. *Curr Allergy Asthma Rep* 2020.
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