



Why Clean A Mattress

By Deborah L Walker

The purpose of this article is to bring to your attention how unhealthy an average mattress or sofa can actually be and what you can do about it. It doesn't matter how old the mattress or stuffed furniture is, it can be sanitized.

Most people don't realize that what they are sleeping on each night could be the cause of allergy symptoms. Experiencing symptoms such as red itchy eyes, sneezing coughing, headaches, depression, or allergy attacks upon awakening have been shown to be caused by dust mites in some people.

It is important to realize that a mattress can harbour viruses, bacteria, fungus, mold spores, and dust mites. Dust mites themselves are not dangerous. It is what they excrete that causes the problems. This excretion is called guanine. Guanine adheres to the fibres in the mattress as tiny mucous coated balls. Later these balls decompose into fine powder like dust. This dust collects in the mattress and causes allergic people to react to the proteins in the bodies and faeces of the mites.

The white dust is found in highest concentration in the areas of the mattress where a person sleeps. The reason for this is that the body creates a perfect humid environment for the dust mites to thrive. The mites feed off the dead skin that people shed. This is all they need to survive. Up to 2,500 of these critters have been counted in as little as one gram of dust. For reference, one gram is about the weight of a paper clip. So, a million or more can be found in a standard size mattress. Plus each one of these can produce 200 times their body weight in excrement during their lifetime. Furthermore, dust mites are also found in high numbers on pillows, carpeting, and upholstered furniture. They float in the air when you vacuum, walk on carpet, or disturb bedding. Every time someone moves around in bed the microscopic dust mite excrement becomes airborne and enters the breathing passages. When some people inhale this contaminated air, they may have allergic reactions.

Usual household insecticides have no effect on dust mites. By spraying bedding or applying some types of cleaner, all that is accomplished is adding ineffective chemicals. So, the only effective



way to rid your bed or furniture of dust mites, bacteria, mold, fungus, or viruses, is to remove them. The best way is to use powerful suction along with UV-C light. The UV-C light will destroy the mites' DNA. This type of light prevents DNA from unzipping and therefore the mites cannot multiply.



If you, or someone you know, suffer from allergies, I urge you to consider having your mattresses tested, cleaned, and sanitized. It is not a cure to clean a mattress. However, many people have reported that their symptoms have improved. Some people try to cover up the problem by using only dust mite proof mattress covers. The research on how effective these products are is mixed. Some people swear by them. The barrier covers mask the problem. Also, the covers don't keep the mites out of carpets, blankets, sheets, or other bedding. The mites need shed skin to survive and they will find it. Since mites also eat natural fibres such as wool and cotton, blankets and sheets also harbour dust mites. These items can be washed in hot water, but it needs to be done every week. The largest population of dust mites will not be disposed of this way because they are found in the mattresses where they survive best.

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