



Respiratory Care WA

Asthma | COPD | Respiratory Health



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respiratorycarewa.org.au

Flooring and Vacuum Cleaners

Removal of carpets in favour of hard floors is sometimes recommended but this has not been shown to reduce asthma symptoms.

For some triggers, particularly allergic triggers such as house dust mite, there is not clear evidence that the types of methods currently recommended to reduce exposure in houses have resulted in an improvement in asthma symptoms for most people.

In the past there has been a wide range of suggestions for things that you can do, should buy or should try to help reduce or get rid of these types of triggers. It seemed logical that avoiding these triggers would be helpful for people with asthma. However, most studies have failed to show improvement in asthma from using strategies or appliances to try to reduce exposure to house dust mite, and these approaches may be costly.

It is highly unlikely that efforts to remove a (suspected) trigger will make a person's asthma go away – except in some cases of occupational asthma where complete removal of the trigger can lead to remission.

This information sheet provides information on how to avoid asthma attacks when in contact with flooring or vacuuming.

- Carpets need to be regularly and thoroughly vacuumed.
- Carpets should have short pile since long pile carpets hold more dust.
- Carpets can be wool or synthetic.
- If dust mite allergy is a problem, then removing carpets from the home may be the best option.
- Polished floorboards need to be damp dusted regularly since dry dusting simply spreads the dust around.
- There is no scientific evidence that any one type of vacuum cleaner will eradicate the dust mite.
- Vacuum the mattress and any upholstered furniture weekly
- Expose floor rugs to sunlight after vacuuming.
- When purchasing a new vacuum cleaner ensure that it has an adequate dust filtering system.



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- The person with asthma should try to avoid doing the vacuuming. However, if this is unavoidable, weekly vacuuming should be performed with the windows and doors open.
- After vacuuming, leave the house and allow the dust to settle for a half an hour or so before re-entering.
- Wet and steam cleaning removes mites from carpets more readily than vacuuming but research suggest that it only improves it by two thirds and the residual water left from the cleaning may promote fungal growth.
- If affected by dust mite allergy it might be useful to wear a dust mask when vacuuming.
- A central ducted vacuum system allows for easy dust removal. The dust does not recirculate back into the room whilst vacuuming which can happen when using conventional vacuum cleaners. The central ducted vacuum system utilises an external dust collection point that requires only infrequent emptying and eliminates re-circulation of allergens into the home.