

HOUSE DUST MITES

House dust mites are found throughout the world. They have also been called “mattress” or “floor” mites. The two most common ones are the European house dust mite, *Dermatophagoides pteronyssinus* and the American house mite, *Dermatophagoides farina*. Both mites are found in Hawaii; the first one being more commonly found in house dust than the latter. Mites are very small and barely visible to the naked eye.



Medical Importance

House dust mites, their cast skins, and fecal matter, may cause “house dust allergies” in sensitized people when they are inhaled. These mites are not known to cause any skin irritation.

Where are the mites found?

House dust mites are closely associated with human and pets. Old houses are often heavily infested. These mites live in moist places found in mattresses, box springs, stuffed furniture, rugs, carpets, and cracks of wooden floors. They feed on dander of humans and pets, and on other organic matter found in house dust.

Biology

The eggs are laid singly and hatch in about a week. They undergo two development stages before becoming adults. The life cycle takes about 30 days to complete.

Control

There is no effective pesticide against house dust mites at present. Environmental control in the house is the most effective means of reducing or eliminating the mites. To accomplish this, the following procedures are suggested:

- 1) Vacuum the entire house weekly. Give special attention to cracks and crevices; around edges of rooms; under beds; upholstered furniture; and carpets. Wear a dust mask while cleaning if you are allergic to house dust.
- 2) Wash or dry clean blankets, bedding and rugs.
- 3) Encase mattress, box springs, pillows with zippered plastic covers.

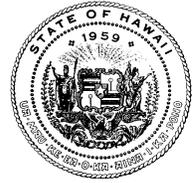
- 4) Air out mattress, box springs, blankets and pillows without covers.
- 5) Ventilate entire house once a week.
- 6) Practice and establish good housekeeping routines.

CAUTION: *Certain pesticides and their solvents may cause respiratory irritation. Persons with respiratory diseases should consult their physicians before using any pesticide. IT IS A VIOLATION OF FEDERAL LAW IF PESTICIDES ARE NOT APPLIED EXACTLY AS THE LABEL DIRECTS.*

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