



A Handbook For Indoor Allergy Allies



A *well* COME HOME

INDOOR ALLERGY AWARENESS WEEK 2024

Allergies are on the rise. This means we will all be in contact with someone whose daily life is negatively affected by an allergy.

For someone with an indoor allergy, daily life is made more difficult because just being in their home – which for most of us is where we can catch our breath from the hustle and bustle of the outside world – is anything but that for them. Instead, being in their home and being exposed to indoor allergens present in every home, can make them cough, wheeze, itch, aggravate skin conditions like eczema and asthma and stop them resting and sleeping. But the impact of living with this condition can be reduced if we foster a more compassionate, inclusive, and safer society attitude to allergies.

Thank you for caring enough to want to learn how you can play your part in supporting people who are affected by indoor allergies.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Simone Miles".

Simone Miles
CEO, Allergy UK



The aim of this year's campaign

- Educate others on indoor allergies and how it can make life difficult for those affected

Why?

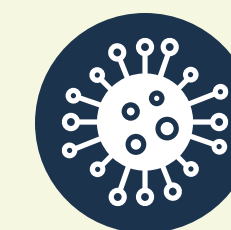
1. Better understanding promotes empathy; which in turn can make the need to 'soldier on' with a condition which brings daily discomfort less burdensome
2. Awareness of symptoms will help anyone who is unaware of indoor allergies and undiagnosed, seek help and support



Pet



House dust mite



Mould

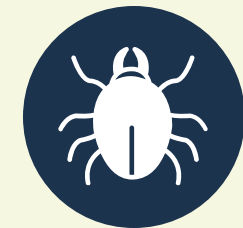
And to ultimately help create

A *well*COME HOME

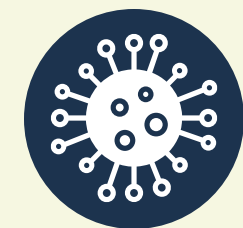
For all



Pet



House dust mite



Mould

What is an indoor allergy?

An allergy is an adverse reaction of the immune system. In the case of indoor allergy it is a reaction to house dustmites, moulds, and pets. Even cleaning products found in the indoor environment can cause allergic reactions.

Whilst in most people these substances (allergens) pose no problem, in allergic individuals their immune system identifies them as a 'threat' and produces an inappropriate response.

The impact of living with an indoor allergy

55% of people experience disturbed sleep because of their indoor allergy and for **20%** of respondents, the sleep disturbance is daily.

(Allergy UK Survey, 2024)



The impact of living with an indoor allergy

69% of people strongly agree or agree that they feel overwhelmed by the amount of time and effort required to manage their indoor allergy.

(Allergy UK Survey, 2024)



The impact of living with an indoor allergy

45% of adults with an indoor allergy have seen a reduction in their disposable income because of the cost associated with having the allergy.

(Allergy UK Survey, 2024)





10

%
of people
living with an
indoor allergy
avoid going
home
because of it

25

%
of people
living with
an indoor
allergy have
been
hospitalised
because of it



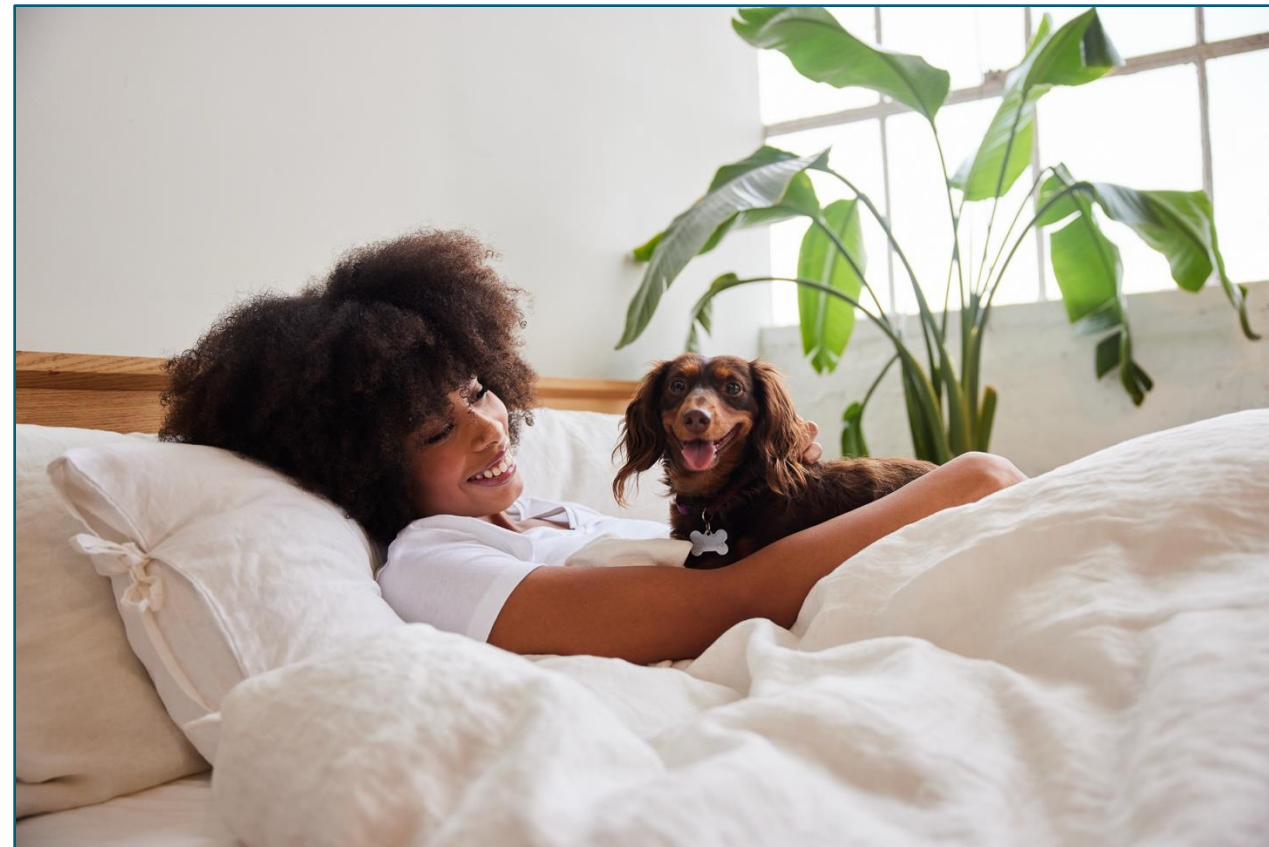
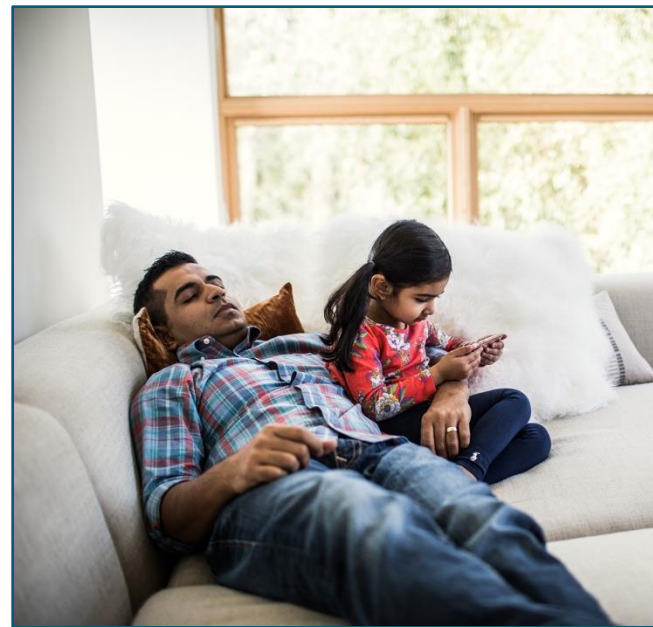
50

%
of children
have missed
school or an
important
event because
of their
allergy

81

%
of adults
with an
indoor
allergy get
NO respite
from their
symptoms

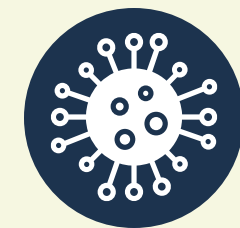
With an indoor allergy, it's harder to have a home life like this....



Pet



House dust mite



Mould

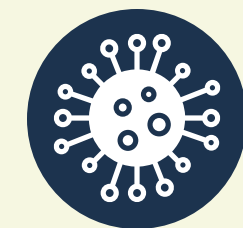
And more likely to have one that looks like this



Pet



House dust mite



Mould

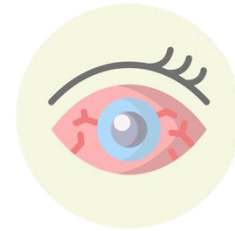
The daily symptoms of an indoor allergy

Uncomfortable symptoms but mild

Allergic reactions with an indoor allergy usually develop over time and are usually exacerbated during the autumn/winter months as more time is spent indoors.



Scan QR code for more information and resources about different types of indoor allergies.



Red eyes



Runny or congested nose



Raised, itchy rash (hives), eczema flare



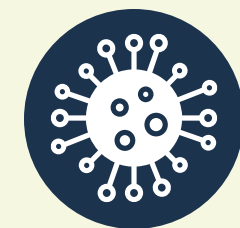
Itchy



Pet



House dust mite

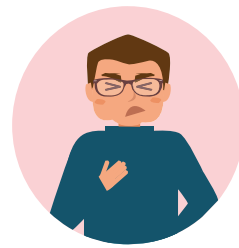


Mould

What happens in a more serious allergic reaction?

Indoor allergens can exacerbate pre-existing respiratory conditions such as asthma.

Symptoms of an asthma attack include:



Chest tightness



Breathing difficulties,
persistent cough, wheeze



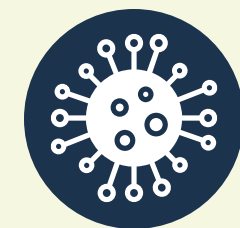
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Pet



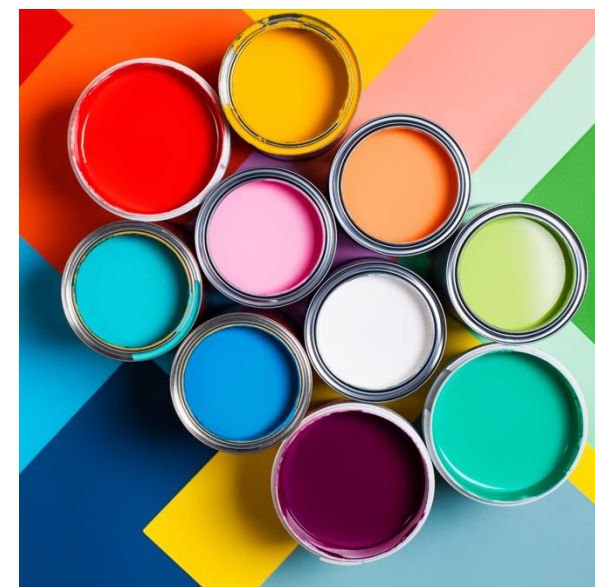
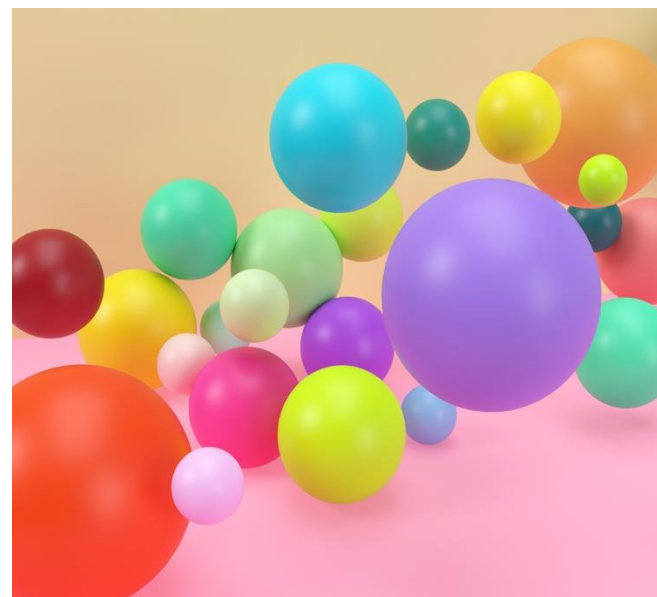
House dust mite



Mould

Other allergens found indoors

As well as house dust mites, animal and mould, there are other substances in the indoor environment that can cause allergic reactions. These include



Chemicals
in cleaning
products



Latex



Woodburners &
Wood Stoves



VOCs in
paints

The symptoms are similar: airways, nose, eyes, throat and sinuses become swollen, irritated and inflamed. Sustained exposure can affect breathing and trigger dangerous asthma attacks and lung damage.

Why being indoor allergy aware matters - # 1

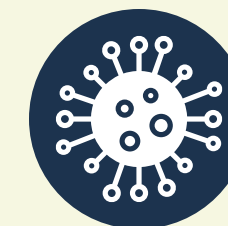
Up to **20%** of the population live with an indoor allergy, according to NHS Choices.



Pet



House dust mite



Mould

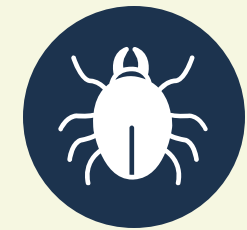
Why being indoor allergy aware matters - # 2

80% of asthma cases can be caused by allergy.

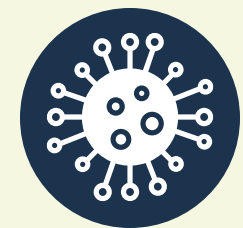
50% of asthmatics aged 30+ are also allergic; the incidence is even higher in younger asthmatics.



Pet



House dust mite



Mould

(Valovirta, 2011)

Why being indoor allergy aware matters - # 3

72%

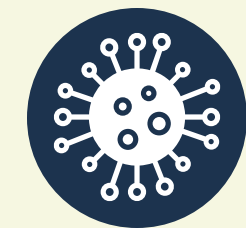
How many adults with an indoor allergy that also has an impact on their mental health



Pet



House dust mite



Mould

Allergy UK Indoor Allergy Survey 2024

Why being indoor allergy aware matters - # 4

We hold the safety of those who live with allergy in our hands.

Even unintentional actions can create a harmful environment for someone with an allergy.



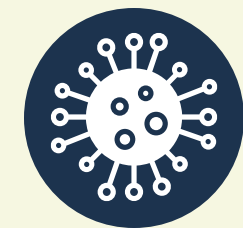
Let's not overlook how we can support those affected any longer.



Pet



House dust mite



Mould

How you can make a
difference:

BE AN ALLERGY ALLY

7 supportive steps:

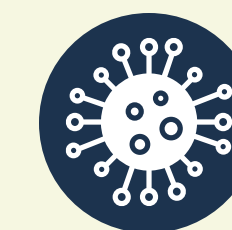
1. **Air purifiers** and dehumidifiers can be effective in reducing exposure to allergens; **consider investing** in one if you have a close friend or relative affected by indoor allergies.
2. Offer to **open windows** to circulate fresh air indoors; it helps reduce the concentration of allergens.
3. If arranging to meet, **be willing to see someone in their own home.** They will have likely taken precautions to reduce their exposure to their indoor allergens at home, making it a more comfortable environment for them.
4. Pet dander can linger for a long time. Always **check if you can bring your pet to someone's home** as their dander can remain for months after.



Pet



House dust mite



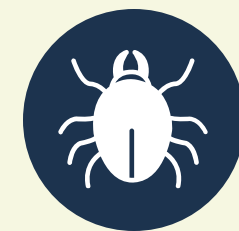
Mould

7 supportive steps:

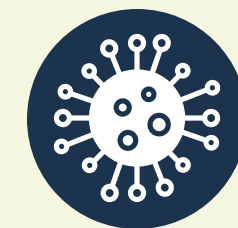
5. Frequent cleaning of home environments is a necessary and time-consuming way of life for someone with an indoor allergy and not a reflection of home hygiene levels. **Try not to judge.**
6. With a pet allergy, **not having the pet present in a home is not enough.** The space is likely to be filled with animal dander that has transferred from pet to home furnishings. This can last for six weeks, even with daily cleaning.
7. **Don't take offence** if someone with an indoor allergy never visits and don't pressure them to.



Pet



House dust mite



Mould

Should symptoms of an indoor allergy become serious

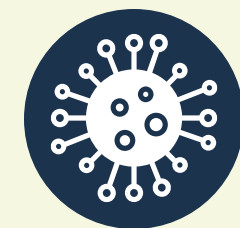
1. Recognise the symptoms of an asthma attack or someone in respiratory distress.
 2. Reassure them, help them to use their reliever inhaler.
 3. Ask them to breathe slowly and deeply.
 4. Sit them down.
 5. If the attack does not ease, advise one to two puffs every two minutes for up to 10 puffs.
 6. If they still don't improve, call 999.
- *If the ambulance has not arrived after 15 minutes and symptoms are not improving, repeat step 5.*
 - *If symptoms are no better after repeating step 5, and the ambulance has still not arrived, contact 999 again immediately.*



Pet



House dust mite



Mould

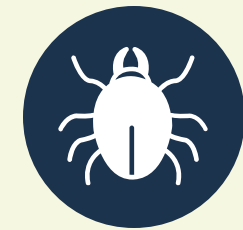
What to do after an asthma attack

After an asthma attack, it is best to advise that an appointment with a GP or asthma nurse should occur within 48 hours of leaving hospital, or ideally on the same day if hospital treatment was not needed.

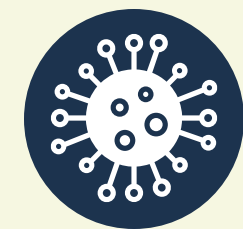
About **1 in 6** people treated in hospital for an asthma attack need hospital care again within 2 weeks, so it's important to discuss how to reduce your risk of future attacks.



Pet



House dust mite



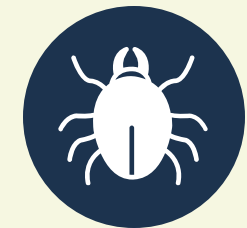
Mould

Always remember...

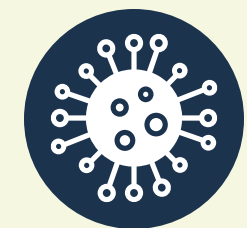
Poor air quality can contribute to the exacerbation of asthma symptoms, making it essential to create an environment that supports respiratory well-being.



Pet



House dust mite



Mould

Who is Allergy UK?

Allergy UK is the leading national patient charity for people living with all types of allergy. Our vision is for a world where no one dies from allergy, so we are on a mission to make everyone in the UK take allergy seriously.

Thank you for wanting to be part of this conversation.



How can we help

- We operate a national helpline to give allergy advice and, in some instances, clinical support to people who are living with an allergy.
- We also support schools, business and organisations in their efforts to be more allergy aware and inclusive.
- Our website www.allergyuk.org is a comprehensive destination for allergy information for patients, healthcare professionals and the general public.



If you think you are affected by an indoor allergy...

- Visit your GP to discuss your symptoms
- Treatment is available to manage the symptoms of an indoor allergy through your GP or pharmacist
- Allergy UK operates an endorsement scheme to identify products which have been scientifically tested to benefit people affected by certain indoor allergies. Visit www.allergyuk.org/our-services/allergyuk-products/ to explore





Contact details

Allergy UK's Helpline operates Mon-Fri from 9am-5pm.

01322 619898

info@allergyuk.org

www.allergyuk.org

