



ALLERGENS AND SLEEP

Allergies are very common in children. Most cannot be prevented, but you can help find and avoid triggers to help your children sleep better at night and function better in the day.

Common Bedroom Allergens & Irritants

- Stuffed Animals
- Carpet
- Dust
- Pets
- Mold
- Cold or Hot Air
- Weather changes
- Smoke
- Odors (candles, sprays)



The Facts

- Allergies are common and affect almost half of all children.
- Allergies can cause stuffy, swollen noses, making it hard to breathe at night, sometimes causing snoring and bad sleep.
- Bad sleep because of allergies can affect your children's behavior, ability to stay awake during the day, and ability to do well in school.

Does my child have allergies? How would I know?

- **Most children who have allergies have symptoms before they are 6-years old.**
- **Common allergy symptoms are: snoring, stuffy nose, runny nose, itchy nose, sneezing, itchy eyes, red eyes, or teary eyes.**
- **Symptoms are often worse in the spring time, but can affect your children all year long.**
- **Not every child's allergy triggers are the same.**
- **If you think your children may have allergies, see your primary care provider to discuss allergy testing options.**
- **An allergy blood test or skin test can help find what your children are allergic to, so you can help them avoid triggers.**

What You Can Do

One of the best things you can do to make your children's sleep environment better if they have allergies or allergy symptoms is to find their triggers, and avoid them.

1. Blood or Skin Allergy Testing

Allergy testing is a quick and simple way to help find what your children's allergies may be. These can often be completed at your primary care provider's office. Your provider may give you a medication to help with their symptoms, which can help with sleep.

2. Keeping the Dust Mites Covered

Dust mites are common triggers for allergies, and we all have them. They are invisible bugs that live in mattresses and pillows. Plastic mattress and pillow covers can be expensive, but they can help with allergy symptoms. If they are not in your budget, try washing the bedding in hot water frequently.

3. Pets and Stuffed Animals

Dust mites can live in stuffed animals and make allergies worse. Pets can also trigger allergy symptoms. Try making a special sleeping place outside of the bedroom for pets and (most) stuffed animals. Try switching out one special stuffed friend a night to sleep with.

4. Stage the Perfect Sleep Temperature

You don't want a room that is too hot, too cold. These can sometimes trigger allergy symptoms. Try keeping the windows closed and the room temperature between 60-67-degrees Fahrenheit. And remember to keep the crib or bed away from windows or fans.

5. Clean Air Makes for Better Sleep

You want a sleep environment that is clean, not too dry, not too moist, and free of candles, incense and strong fragrances. These can sometimes trigger allergy symptoms. Smoking should also always be avoided in the home.



PARENT RESOURCES

- nationalsleepfoundation.org
- sleepforkids.org
- [HealthyChildren.org](http://healthychildren.org)
- AAP Program: "Brush, Book, Bed" is available at: <http://bit.ly/bedroutine>
- <http://acaai.org/allergies/treatment/allergy-testing/children>