

Most people suffer from allergies at some point in their life. Some people have more issues with allergies and may need help limiting their exposure. What many people do not realize is that there are common sources of allergens in our homes, knowing these and doing things to reduce the allergen load can help relieve symptoms.

The following is a list of common sources of allergens within the home, we call the “Allergy Bakers Dozen”.

1. Houseplants

Can easily grow mold. Keep on the dry side to decrease mold growth. Keep out of the bedroom due to mold sensitizing.

2. Christmas trees

Grow mold quickly. Consider artificial trees.

3. Blue jean buttons

Made from nickel which is a common allergen. Use clear nail polish on the back to prevent skin exposure to nickel.

4. Perfume

Contains volatile organic compounds, which are allergenic as well as toxic. Minimize use.

5. Candles

As allergenic as cigarettes. Limit use.

6. Soaps and detergents

Many contain phthalates which can cause allergic reactions in sensitive individuals. Choose ones with no phthalates.

7. Carpeting

Collects dust mites and built up dust/allergens. Remove carpet from the home, or at least the bedroom, if possible.

8. Spices*

Key offenders: coriander, poppy seeds, pepper, paprika, cumin, saffron. Limit their use if sensitivities/allergies are observed.

9. Wall paint

Contains volatile organic compounds. Limit exposure to chipped or peeling paint. Consider “green” paint alternatives when doing home improvements.

10. Beer and alcohol*

Corn, barley, rye, and agave (makes tequila) are all high in sulfur dioxide, which can cause allergic reactions in those who are sulfur sensitive. Limit or avoid use.

11. Dry-cleaned clothes

Dry cleaners use perchloroethylene (“Perc”) as a primary solvent, which is allergenic as well as potentially toxic. Air out dry-cleaned clothes outside with plastic off before bringing inside.

12. HVAC filters

These are designed to clear your air of fumes, odors and particulates (ie allergens). Change every three months minimum (with the changing seasons).

+1. Pets

Pet dander is a common allergen. Keep them out of the bedroom.

*For more information on common food allergens/triggers refer to the *Elimination Diet – Comprehensive Guide*