



# Prescriptions for PREVENTION



Guidance from the Western States  
Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Unit

## Dust



### Did you know?

**D**ust can be contaminated with lead and other toxicants from nearby traffic, mining, agriculture and manufacturing, as well as chemicals used in the home. Young children are exposed to more dust because they put their hands in their mouths a lot. Dust and dust mites are very common in households and can be sources of allergies and worsen or trigger asthma and or eczema.



### Do

- ✓ **Clean children's toys** and other items they put in their mouths frequently with soap and water.
- ✓ **Wipe surfaces with wet microfiber cloths** and use a vacuum with a HEPA filter at least once weekly.
- ✓ **If you have a heating ventilation and air conditioning system (HVAC)**, use MERV 13 filters to trap contaminants.
  - ✓ If not, use a portable air filter with a HEPA filter.
- ✓ **If your home was built** during or before the 1970's, consider testing for lead.
  - ✓ **If lead is detected in the paint** in your home, do not allow children to touch high dust areas such as windowsills and wipe them down frequently.
- ✓ **Use barriers to contain dust** if you have construction in your home.
  - ✓ **See EPA's guidelines** for more details.
- ✓ **To help decrease allergens:**
  - ✓ **Encase pillows and mattresses** in "hypoallergenic" covers to reduce exposure.
  - ✓ **Wash sheets and blankets weekly** in hot water.



### Don't

- ✗ **Don't leave windows open** on windy days if you live in a dusty or sandy area or if there is construction nearby.
- ✗ **Don't use heavy drapes** that capture dust if alternatives like roll-down shades or washable curtains are available.
- ✗ **Don't wear your shoes inside.** Use a doormat and leave shoes at the door.
- ✗ **Don't wear work clothes inside** if you work in heavy industry, construction or farming. Wash work clothes separately.



For more information, scan the code or visit  
<https://wspehsu.ucsf.edu/projects/prescriptions-for-prevention-exposure-sources/>