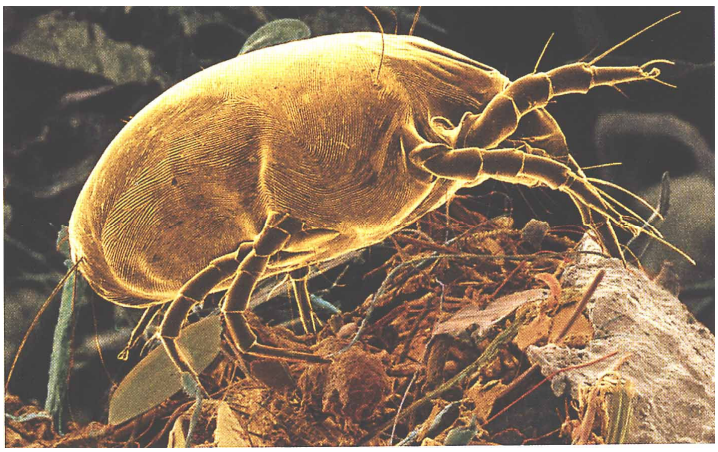
Dustmites can make their home in mattresses, pillows, blankets, quilts, carpets and fabric covered furniture. The more these items come in contact with people, the more likely dust mites will be present, and be able to survive.



Most animals, including the human animal shed pounds of skin flakes, dust-mite food, every year, most homes in the world are actual breeding grounds for a litany of health problems, like asthma. It is hard to imagine that we are not all actually ankle deep in debris but nevertheless we all naturally lose skin, head and pubic hairs by the thousands every year. A combined household of four normal adult occupants shed over three pounds in weight of skin flakes annually. That is about half a kilo for our continental viewers, which sounds more.

Over 80% of the material seen floating in a sunbeam is actually flakes of skin. And what with all the vaporized sweat, breath and spit that settles on the floor at a rate of pints each day. The acres of soil, pollen, food crumbs and other miscellaneous dirt fragments, including dried dog faeces, brought in from outside by wind or boot, a painful picture is painted of some rather nasty concoctions living in our very home.

They are most prolific in bedrooms as this area has an ambience that the **dust mite** loves. A bed can contain many thousands of them and an aging pillow can owe a fifth of its weight not to filling or feathers but to mites, dead and alive, but mainly their droppings.

A recent survey by an American carpet cleaning firm, stated that many carpets in British living-rooms are an ideal breeding ground for a myriad of organic material. Millions of dustmites, thousands of fleas, a selection of Bedbugs and all their children, might live in a carpet that has not seen a vacuum cleaner since it was last in the carpet store.
Though this is an international problem, it is not just a British dilemma. This household filth in any country is a seaside villa to the mighty house dust-mite. Dust-mites must be in heaven, as it must be the human equivalent of being locked in the Cadbury chocolate factory. But this is a two edged sword. Every ounce of faecal mater has come from a pound of human skin, so if we did not have dust mites surely there would be a lot more skin about.
A dust-mite, **Dermatophagoides Pteronyssinus,** produce more than **200 times their own weight in faeces**, 2,000 droppings, in a life time. A protein not only in the dust mite itself, but mainly in their faecal matter is the reason, many of us can suffer so much. When this allergen becomes airborne and is inhaled, it can trigger asthma, hay fever or itchy skin reactions. A single mite can produce up to 20 microscopic pellets of faecal matter daily.

Enlarged view of a dust mite on human skin

In one's travels, as maybe a milkman, delivery-person, sales-person or even just visiting friends or relations, you will soon discover how comfortable you feel being sat in someone's home. The first thing you notice is the smell that hits you either with pleasure or horror. You know almost immediately how you are going to feel by staying too long, least of all being offered something to eat or drink.

Domestic Dust mites, like every creature, have a specific environment that it has evolved to suit. These mites tend to be most numerous in warmer homes with high humidity. The most favorable conditions for growth and development of dust mites are around 23-25 degrees Celsius with 70 - 80 percent relative humidity.

House dust mites absorb and lose moisture easily through their skin, and like most insects, are very vulnerable to dehydration. You will sweat pints of water and body oils in a night. You will lose hundreds of skin-flakes. And if you then protect the mite's environment with a thick quilt and central heating, the mite can do nothing but multiply unhindered. Thus producing more allergens that make you suffer.

One of the best things you can do is keep your home dry and comfortable not hot and stuffy, we need to ventilate our home and use our heating system wisely. The modern home ventilation and conditioning systems seem to work the best. These systems take the natural heat the home already produces and circulates it where it is needed, keeping the moisture content down and reducing the reproduction of **dust mites.**

House dust mites cannot drink. They obtain water partly from their food but the bulk of water need is obtained by a mechanism of hydrophilic (water-loving) crystals in their armpits. These finely structured crystals can obtain enough water for the mite when the relative humidity in the air is above 60 per cent. The mite must tone down its activity if the relative humidity drops below this figure.

In Auckland, the relative humidity is above 60 per cent most of the year, which explains the very high levels of dust mite counts in this city environment, by reducing the humidity you will reduce the # of dust mites, therefore allergies and any recurring asthma and other associated medical conditions.

This article taken from various websites including

http://www.thesahara.net and http://www.allergy.org.nz

www.EasierVentilation.co.nz