



Insect bites are a common complaint, causing itchy pink or red bumps which may be small and discrete or large and hive-like. This is due to the body's allergic response to the insect bite. Remember that insects are everywhere in our environment, especially as house-mites or spiders in your carpets, upholstery, and bedding, or as fleas on our pets, or as flies, chiggers or mosquitoes outside in grasses or at parks. Insects are not always visible to the naked eye. While it is impossible to rid your environment entirely of insects, the following steps should decrease your exposure to them.

General Recommendations:

- Ensure that screens are always in place on your doors and windows.
- Vacuum and dust your house often. If possible, have someone else do it.
- Consider debugging the house with home-kit. These are easily available in drugstores or hardware stores. Two recommended products are Ortho Home Pest Control and Ortho Total (for fleas). Follow instructions on the products carefully.
- Never lie down on carpets.
- Consider wearing pants and long-sleeves shirts.
- Use cotton blankets and comforters filled with man-made materials. Wash them every week in hot water to kill mites.
- Use washable curtains or shades instead of heavy drapes.
- Leave floors bare as much as possible, or use washable area rugs.

If you have a pet:

- The most common source of insects is pets. The only "insect free" pet is a fish.
- Even if you do not see fleas on your pets, consider de-fleaing them. There are several new products available from your veterinarian.
- Keep your pets outdoors.
- If they are indoors, keep them out of your bedroom.
- Never let your pets sleep with you.
- Train your pets to stay off furniture. Many pet stores carry sprays that discourage pets from getting onto furniture.
- Wash your pet once a week. If possible have a trained pet professional wash your pet.