Table 4

Standardised advice for dust avoidance in accordance with the British Society for Allergy and Clinical Immunology

These recommendations progress from easy measures to more involved steps, which should be applied to the household where possible. Subjects may respond at differing levels of avoidance.

Step 1: Reduction of dampness

- Open windows and ventilation in kitchens and bathrooms after cooking and bathing
- Avoid drying clothes indoors
- Air bedding before remaking beds
- Run central heating a few degrees lower

Step 2: Prevent dust build up

- Use enclosed storage for clothes
- Restrict areas where dust may settle, e.g. cabinets and wardrobes
- Regularly wipe surfaces where dust settles with a damp cloth
- Regularly wipe window blinds
- Vacuum soft furnishings and carpets, replacing collection bags regularly
- Vacuum mattresses every two weeks

Step 3: High temperature washing

- Choose fabrics which sustain washing at 60°C which will kill dust mites
- Wash bedding fabrics at 60°C every two weeks
- Wash curtains at 60°C

Step 4: Bedding and soft toys

- Replace pillows with new ones every six months
- Replace blankets with duvets made of synthetic material
- Cover all dust sensitised child's mattresses, duvets and pillows with microporous membrane covers and wipe clean when bedding changed
- Reduce number of soft toys around bed area
- Put soft toys in freezer once per month for six hours to kill dust mites

Step 5: Carpets

- Replace carpets with linoleum/vinyl flooring or cork/wood boards without cracks
- Choose short pile synthetic carpets
- Wash rugs at 60°C

Step 6: High efficiency vacuum cleaners

- Consider buying a high efficiency vacuum cleaner for floors, carpets, soft toys and furnishings

Step 7: Replace home furnishings

- Replace woven seat covers and material sofas with cane, canvas and leather-like covers