

## NEW IN HOMES &gt; ECO IDEAS

## HOT HOME PRODUCTS

## Relief for asthma, allergy sufferers

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SPECIAL TO THE STAR

When the weather co-operates, May is one of the loveliest months on the calendar. Except, possibly, if you're one of the approximately three million Canadians who suffer from asthma. About three quarters of those affected also experience seasonal allergies that can trigger asthma. So for them, itchy eyes, sneezing and worse symptoms obscure May's many splendours.

While sufferers can't control outdoor irritants, steps can be taken in the home to lessen indoor exposure to asthma and allergy triggers. The Asthma Society of Canada ([www.asthma.ca](http://www.asthma.ca)) recommends keeping the home free from dust mites, mould and spores and maintaining good air quality.

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation ([www.cmhc.ca](http://www.cmhc.ca)) also has a free downloadable brochure with lots of useful information called "Fighting Asthma in your Home" as part of its excellent "About 4 Hours" series.

One product that might help is a new line of bedding from a young Canadian company called SmartSilk that has just been given "asthma friendly" status from the Asthma Society.

The product uses 100 per cent silk filling, processed to resist mould and mildew growth, in a 100 per cent cotton outer shell, which acts as a barrier to allergens. While warm and cozy, these duvets have a slim profile, and don't have the puffy look of down.

Even for those who don't have asthma or allergies, the breathable fabric and filling of the duvet will help maintain an even body temperature, keeping the sleeper warm in winter and cool in summer. Its makers suggest that its light weight make it a good choice for people with arthritis, rheumatism and circulation issues. Because the mate-

rial wicks away moisture, it will also reduce the discomfort of night sweats, often caused by menopause or illness.

The machine-washable duvets come in standard mattress sizes, with prices starting at \$200 for a twin. A 35x42-inch crib size for babies is also available for \$100. Pillow protectors start at \$35 and the cushiony silk-filled mattress covers, which are water resistant, start at \$175.

Unfortunately, SmartSilk products are not currently available in stores, but can be ordered at [www.smartsilk.com](http://www.smartsilk.com). For orders over \$150, shipping is free; under \$150, a \$10 charge is applied. The line will also soon be featured on QVC ([www.qvc.com](http://www.qvc.com)).

### New products help reduce indoor exposure to outdoor irritants

Keeping dust and dirt at bay is important for asthma and allergy sufferers. But it's important to do so without chemicals that may trigger an attack.

Ted Fagan makes a line of household cleaners called Eco Mist. The ingredients, which include corn, tree sap, processed coconut extract, sugarcane and de-ionized water, are completely safe, says Fagan. He demonstrated his faith in the safety of his products by taking a swig from a bottle at a recent promotional event for Home Depot, which will begin selling 18 exclusive Eco Mist products in its stores in July. (Some Eco Mist products are already available at Home Outfitters, then Bay and Grand & Toy.)

At the event, Fagan explained how his product works; natural agriculture ingredients are heated to the point where molecular changes

take place, and they become electrically charged cleaning agents that emulsify dirt, oil, and grime, making it easy to rinse away. Not only is the surface left clean, says Fagan, but there's no chemical residue on which new bacteria can grow.

Eco Mist products contain no dyes or fragrances, are readily biodegradable and are not tested on animals. Many of the products also come in 3.78-litre refillable containers. For information, go to [www.ecomistsolutions.com](http://www.ecomistsolutions.com).

Mould tends to lurk in moisture-prone spots like the bathroom and basement. To combat it, you could try a household mould-fighting product. Concrobium Mold Control is a DIY solution that eliminates existing indoor mould and prevents new growth. Its makers say that since it's made from inorganic salts, Concrobium is more eco-friendly than conventional products that contain bleach, ammonia or other chemicals.

As it dries, Concrobium forms an odourless, invisible antimicrobial coating that kills mould and fungal spores, and prevents new growth. It can be applied for spot mould control, or used over large areas during building or renovation. It can also be "cold-fogged" — misted over an inaccessible area such as a crawlspace or wall cavity. For that kind of job, you'll need a fogger, available at most tool rental outlets.

Concrobium Mold Control, which is sold at numerous hardware stores, can be used on finished or unfinished hard surfaces, as well as on fabric. A 946-millilitre spray bottle sells for about \$10. For more information, visit [www.concrobium.com](http://www.concrobium.com).

Vicky Sanderson's Hot Home Products appear every Saturday in New In Homes. Email her at: [vwriter@sympatico.ca](mailto:vwriter@sympatico.ca).



The Eco Mist line of cleaners will soon be available at Home Depot.

Concrobium Mold Control claims to eliminate indoor mould.



With 100 per cent silk filling, processed to resist mould and mildew growth, SmartSilk bedding may be useful to asthma sufferers.