

The moms**AWARE** Dustbusting Dozen

Household dust contains organic matter such as adsorbed and absorbed volatile compounds, as well as human epithelial cells. Mold and bacteria grow when moisture is added to the dust.

The checklist below is designed to help keep dust to a minimum. Clean these areas weekly, monthly, or seasonally, depending on the location and accessibility. HEPA vacuums with hose attachments work well for hard-to-reach areas.

For a natural dustbusting formula, blend 1/2 c. white vinegar with 4 drops olive oil. Dab on rag and dust. Add essential oil for natural fragrance. Store in glass jar.

- Refrigerator Coils.** Pull out the refrigerator and clean under, around, and behind. Pay special attention to refrigerator coils by vacuuming the heavy dust and using a brush to clear off any remaining dust. This task will cut down on cooling costs due to increased efficiency.
- Cabinet Tops.** Use a ladder and carefully dust the tops of cabinets in all areas of the house. Use a vacuum with hose attachment if needed.
- Ceiling Fans.** Use a ladder and gently wipe blades, top and bottom.
- Bathroom Vents.** Remove vent covers and clean thoroughly every six months. Wipe and/or vacuum weekly.
- Blinds.** Vacuum using brush attachment. Wipe with damp rag for more thorough cleaning.
- Drapes.** Wash on gentle setting if machine washable. Remove promptly from dryer or allow to dry in fresh air. Vacuum regularly. If window treatments are dry-clean only, try a natural alternative such as “steam” cleaning by placing window treatments in dryer with a damp colorfast towel. Add some essential oil to the towel for a pleasant scent.
- Dryer Vents.** Use a lint brush or vacuum attachment to remove accumulated lint from under the lint trap and other accessible areas. Consider using a [coil brush](#). Clean behind the dryer and make sure the dryer hose is working properly and free of accumulated lint.
- Bookshelves.** Once or twice a year take all books off shelves and vacuum with brush attachment. Wipe down shelves and replace books. Discard books that smell musty.
- Furniture.** Move large pieces of furniture seasonally. Vacuum under and behind.
- Paper.** De-clutter piles of paper. Sort through and discard. Old newspapers are magnets for dust. Newspaper and magazine collections are best stored in the garage and/or plastic bins.
- Light Fixtures.** Clean light fixtures carefully by hand, using a damp cloth.
- Mattresses.** Flip mattresses and vacuum. Consider investing in [allergy-friendly mattress covers](#) that are machine-washable.