The Facts about Carpet and Asthma and Allergy

For Health Care Administrators and Facility Managers

Making the right decisions about carpet starts with having the facts. That is why the Carpet and Rug Institute (CRI) sponsors scientific research and gathers data from independent sources to help professionals and the public make educated flooring choices. **Visit carpet-rug.org to learn more.**

Issue

Carpet is perceived as a potential contributor to asthma and allergy.

What You Should Know

- There is *no* scientific study linking the rise of allergy and asthma to the use of carpet. Indeed, several studies actually disprove any correlation.
- A 15-year Swedish study found no link between carpet usage and the incidence of allergy or asthma. In fact, even when carpet usage in Sweden *decreased* by 70 percent, allergy reactions in the general population *increased* by 30 percent. [1]
- Carpet may even be helpful to people with asthma: an 18-nation study of nearly 20,000 people found a statistical relationship between carpeted bedrooms and *reduced* asthma symptoms and bronchial responsiveness. [2]
- A possible explanation: carpet acts like a filter, trapping allergens away from the breathing zone so they can be removed through proper vacuuming and deep cleaning extraction.
    - Studies have measured the distribution of airborne dust associated with normal activities on smooth surfaces and carpeted floors. The findings show that walking on hard surfaces disturbs more particles, which become airborne and enter the breathing zone. In contrast, carpeted surfaces trap more particles so that walking disturbs fewer particles, resulting in fewer particles in the breathing zone.[3]
- For best results removing pollutants trapped in carpet, use **CRI Green Label vacuums and CRI Seal of Approval cleaning products.** Details on these certification and testing programs can be found at carpet-rug.org.

[1] Shishoo, R. and Borjesson, A. 1996. Allergy claims 'unproved'. *Carpet and Flooring Review* (January5).

[2] Zock, J.P., D. Jarvis, C. Luczynska, J. Sunyer, and P. Burney. 2002. Housing Characteristics, reported mold exposure, and asthma in the European Community Respiratory Health Survey, *Journal Allergy and Clinical Immunology* 110 no. 2:285-292. Community Respiratory Health Survey, Journal

[3] Cicciarelli, Bradley A., David L. Davidson, Edward H. Hart and P. Robert Peoples. CFD Analysis of the Behavior of Airborne Allergens in Carpeted and Uncarpeted Dwellings. Solutia, Inc.