



Food Storage Mites*
Tyrophagus Putrescentia

Storage mites, related to house dust mites, are microscopic mites that cannot be seen by the naked eye that primarily live in and feed on dry grains and dry feed stuffs including dog and cat food.

One of the storage mites, *Tyrophagas putrescentiae*, the mold mite, is very common but usually go unnoticed except when it becomes abundant – such as in situations where there is moisture or high humidity.¹ Since even dried foods have some moisture (typically 10%) they are susceptible to mold and provide an optimum breeding ground for storage mites. Infestations have been found in cheese, flour, grain, seeds, bulbs, straw, wallpaper, furniture, dried fruits and cereals.²

Pets (and people) are exposed to mite body parts and excrement by consuming food containing them, absorbing them through the skin and inhalation,³ and exposure can lead to sensitization.

Although it's impossible to totally eliminate storage mites from the environment steps can be taken to inhibit their multiplication and thereby minimize your pet's exposure to mite allergens.

The following suggestions should prove useful in controlling storage mite populations:

- Avoid storage of pet food in garages, sheds or basements and store pet food in airtight containers.
- Do not use old or outdated pet food. Check food for dust, mold or odors and remove questionable food from the house and discard immediately.
- Wash food containers frequently in detergent and HOT (130 F) water. Dry completely before refilling with food.
- Dispose of pet food bags immediately outside of the house.
- Do not stockpile foods. Purchase only what is needed for 30 days at a time.
- Avoid keeping fruit and other foods that can mold on the counter.
- Check food bags for tears or holes prior to purchase.
- Avoid low quality pet foods with a high degree of particulate debris at the bottom of the bag.

¹ Welcome to Florida!

² There is no where to hide.

³ Only everything you need to do to live.