

Allergy mattress covers - Buyers guide

This document is intended to save you - the buyer, money, time and effort in purchasing what should be a simple product, which is all too often surrounded by hype and shady marketing practices.

Sleepclean.com is a major retailer in the allergy bedding business, mattress, pillow, box spring and duvet covers along with allergy pillows and natural silk duvets is all we sell. Over the years we have gained a high level of expertise in this field, and we have tried to promote our products to suit clients requirements - those requirements being quite simple (we know this because we recently asked all of our clients), namely;

- *Provide a reliable barrier to allergens.*
- *Be hard wearing and durable.*
- *Be comfortable to sleep on.*
- *Be well priced, with reliable delivery and after sales support.*
- *To reflect the description in the marketing material.*

So, it's time to "put our money where our mouth is" please read on.

This document is divided into 4 sections;

1. *What are dust mites, why are they a problem?*
2. *Why do we need allergy bedding, how does it help?*
3. *What fabrics are available, why are there so many brand names, how can I compare them?*
4. *Where should I buy allergy bedding and why?*



1. What are dust mites, why are they a problem?

I would imagine that since you have got this far in your search for information, you are probably at the stage where you know a lot more than you ever wanted to about dust mites!

So in order to keep this section as brief as possible, here are some facts and figures about our little friends or should we say enemies;

- They are tiny, there are millions (and millions) in the average home.
- They are a member of the arachnid (spider family)
- They make their homes in warm moist environments (a mattress is dust mite Shangri-la).
- They feed on dead human skin cells, animal skin cells and moisture from sweat.
- They are completely harmless, what, oh that's ok then - wait; it's their excrement that causes problems.
- In their short lifetime they produce 20 times their body weight in excrement.
- This excrement is a major allergenic trigger; it's an irritant that causes asthma, rhinitis, eczema, morning stuffy nose, wheezing, tight chest and sinusitis.
- Only pollen causes more allergic reactions than dust mite allergens.



2. Why do we need allergy bedding, how does it help?

Sleepclean allergy bedding completely encases the mattress, pillow, duvet and box spring. All of our covers are double stitched and use a high quality zipper enclosure (not Velcro like some cheaper brands). They are also regularly quality control tested by both the manufacture and ourselves.

Now, the fact that they completely enclose the mattress is important, there are a few brands and manufacturers on the market that claim to be able to control allergens by just putting a fitted type sheet (with an elastic skirt) or pad over the mattress etc. Now although this is a much cheaper solution due to the amount of fabric consumed and the labor in making the item, we do not consider it a viable control method.

We believe that only completely encasing the item will control the problem - and many respected organizations including Health Canada, The Lung Association, and the Allergy & Asthma Information Association agree with us (we can give you the links to the relevant web pages if you want them).

Sleepclean are a neutral supplier with no direct ties to any manufacturer, if we thought or could show that this form of fitted cover would work, well, then we would sell them!



So, to answer the question why & how, here again are some facts;

- Sleepclean allergy covers completely encase the mattress, they are fastened using a high quality zipper enclosure.
- Encasing the item stops the food supply (shed human skin cells) to the dust mite.
- They also stop the moisture supply (sweat) to the mites.
- By completely encasing the mattress any debris that is within the mattress is contained - so nothing new gets in and nothing old gets out - that's good.
- As an additional bonus, one of our fabrics Poly Cotton Plus (PCP) has a waterproof membrane on the inside of the cover, this completely waterproofs the mattress. Sleepclean always recommend PCP for children's mattress covers.

Just to recap (because we think it's important) - Sleepclean do not sell or recommend fitted type covers or mattress pads as an allergy solution.

3. What fabrics are available, why are there so many brand names, how can I compare them?

In many respects, this section contains the most valuable information. This is the section that I knew would get up the noses of my competition when I wrote it, it did, and it still does now.

Here's why; lets face it, an allergy mattress cover is not rocket science, it's just some pieces of fabric sewn together to make a 6 sided cover (a rectangular prism if my geometry is correct).

So the marketing people only really have one thing to focus on - that's the fabric.

Every manufacturer/distributor uses a trade name, here are some of the names that you could come across if you search "the web"

cottonknit, cotton supreme, value guard, softek, softshield, tricot knit, economy light, night lite nylon, economy cover, tricot, stretch knit, satin soft classic, lightweight stretch polyester, sleep safe satin, satin safe, breath easy, clean air, clean rest, micron one, polycotton blend, linen, cotton polyester blend, allersoft, pristine, cotton guard ultra, breath right.

I managed to find all these in a 5 minute web search, there are many, many more, but you get my point.

This is how the suppliers start to confuse the buyer; firstly it is very difficult for the consumer to compare like for like products. Is pristine the same as allersoft or is it better than breath easy or not as good as breath right?

What happens is that the buyer (you) begin to use price as a guide to quality and this is exactly what the seller wants to happen, why?

Here's why.

When a buyer focuses on quality but uses price as the primary measure, it is much easier for the seller to sell at the top end of the product line, thus protecting, or even inflating profit margins.

But, there is another trick which is prevalent in this market; some of the biggest companies use it to great success.

Here we go; the sales company set their pricing on their products, maybe four or even five different fabrics, so, you would expect the cheaper the

fabric is for the company to buy, the lower the quality and the lower the price that the consumer has to pay. The cost to cut and sew one fabric into a cover is pretty constant irrespective of the fabric quality, so that has little bearing on the equation.

But here is where they will sting you.

First think about how you may buy something, the thought process is often "well I need one, I want a good quality one, so, if I buy towards the top of the price range I should get a good one".

Here is what the seller will do; they will have a budget fabric (cheap to buy) and a luxury fabric (expensive to buy) but in the middle, towards the top of the range they will often drop in lower/middle quality fabric at a vastly inflated price. This is the fabric that the seller usually sells the most of, not because it's particularly good, but because of where it falls in the "price is a measure of quality" chart.

Is it a scam? Is it just good marketing? Is it taking advantage of buyers (who could be sick)? Well, I guess that depends on whether you are the buyer or the seller!

So, to answer the questions in the title to this section;

What fabrics are available?

There are really only about 5 different fabrics out there, there are however hundreds of brand names.

Why are there so many brand names?

To confuse the buyer, to maintain (and inflate) profit margins.

How can I compare them?

Without getting samples from every seller (and Sleepclean are one of the very few who send out free samples) it's almost impossible to compare fabrics. But, there really is no need to:

If your primary focus is a low cost fabric then choose SMS. (if you want to waterproof the bed as well then add one of our waterproof pads/covers).

If you want a higher quality fabric and want it to be waterproof then choose PCP (we recommend this for all children's beds).

If you want a high quality fabric, but don't need it to be waterproof, then choose our 100% cotton.

Just two quick notes here;

Sleepclean carry 3 fabrics, we call them SMS, PCP and 100% cotton, we call them that because that's what the fabric is called, and it's what the manufacturer calls it. We stock 3 fabrics because we have only ever seen 3 distinct requirements for this type of product;

- 1. A budget cover, suitable for box spring, mattress, pillow and duvet. Excellent allergen control. Manmade, but very lightweight and comfortable.*
- 2. A high quality poly/cotton blend with 50% cotton content and a waterproof membrane. Again excellent allergen control and waterproof.*
- 3. A high quality 100% cotton, but without a membrane, Excellent allergen control but not waterproof. These covers are like sleeping on a high quality cotton sheet, especially after they have been washed a few times.*

Sleepclean do not sell Vinyl bedding covers, although they are cheap, they do not breath well, are uncomfortable to sleep on, and will pool any liquid spills - not absorb them like our PCP fabric or waterproof pads/covers. If you want a vinyl cover, buy the heaviest gauge (thickness) you can find, If you really want to put vinyl on your bed, Walmart is as good a place as any to buy them.

4. Where should I buy allergy bedding and why?

We think that you should buy your allergy bedding at Sleepclean, "well of course you would say that" you might say "well of course I would say that" I would agree. The thing is we can back up our statement:

1. Our products are well made (in USA - not imported from the Far East). They are double stitched with high quality zippers. They all have strong warranties and are quality controlled.
2. We are one of the very few companies that will send you free of charge a sample swatch of our three fabrics - this gives you the advantage of actually having the fabric in your hands, you don't have to rely on the sellers glowing description of the fabric.
3. Sleepclean only sell allergy bedding - it's all we do, if we did not offer the best products at great prices we simply would not stay in business.
4. We know our products inside out. Let me give you an example, this is a transcript of a telephone conversation I had when I called our major competitor's toll free helpline.

"Good afternoon, I was just looking at your website, the allergy bedding section. I wonder if you could give me some more information about your (brand name) allergy covers"?

"Yes, of course, what do you need to know"?

"Well, I was wondering what the covers are made of"

At this point the helpline person began reading the description on the webpage.

"Yes, I saw that information on the webpage, but what are they made of"?

"What do you mean"?

"What fabric are they made from, is there any cotton in it"?

"Oh, yes there is cotton in it"

"OK, do you know what the cotton content is"?

"I think it's quite high"

At this stage I thanked the helpline person and hung up.

My point is this, you can buy your allergy covers from a company that employs people who have little to no knowledge of what they are selling, or you can buy from Sleepclean who can tell you exactly what they are selling, and more importantly what best fits your requirements.

5. Our prices are excellent, add this to the fact that we operate a what you see is what you pay (taxes & shipping inclusive) policy and you can really get great value for money. We also operate a price match policy; we will do our absolute best to match any price (even eBay) prices with a comparable fabric.

Sleepclean can also help you with other health related bedding supplies such as waterproof bed pads and covers.

Thank you for taking the time to visit our web site, and for reading this document. We hope that it will help you to purchase your allergy bedding and ultimately help solve your allergy problems.

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