

PET ALLERGIES

- There is no such thing as a hypoallergenic dog or cat. The amount of hair a dog or cat has or how much it sheds will not necessarily affect or prevent allergies. Some pets can be less irritating than others but that is strictly on an individual basis and cannot be predicted.
- The most common pet allergies are found in their dander (dead skin cells that are shed by an animal), sebaceous and salivary gland secretions and urine.
- Some breeds of dogs shed dander more often and in larger quantities than other breeds.
- Most people are also allergic to things other than their pets, such as dust mites, pollen, mold, mildew, perfumes and soaps; all of which can be found in the home.
- Allergies are usually cumulative. Once a threshold limit is exceeded, symptoms may occur. If you eliminate other allergens found in the home, you may not have to get rid of your pet.
- Allergies to cats are usually the result of secretions of the sebaceous glands and from the cat's saliva during its self-cleaning process. The saliva dries on the skin and is then carried into the air.

WAYS TO IMPROVE THE HOUSEHOLD ENVIRONMENT

- Keep the bedroom free of allergen catchers including bookshelves, clutter under the bed, etc.
- Use sheets, pillowcases and bedspreads that are made of 100% washable cotton or cotton flannel and wash them frequently.
- Use hypoallergenic bedding and pillow materials.
- Refrain from using perfumes, scented detergents and fabric softeners.
- Dust and vacuum frequently using a vacuum equipped with a HEPA filter.
- Use an air purifier fitted with a HEPA filter.
- Clean the litter box frequently using low-dust, perfume-free filler.
- Bathe and brush your pet frequently, possibly outdoors.

Source: ASPCA