

Allergic to Cats?

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Millions of people are allergic to cats. Symptoms range from eye irritation to potentially life-threatening asthma attacks. One can develop an allergy at any age. Allergies most commonly develop to proteins.

Cat allergens are proteins that are shed in saliva, skin secretions, and to some extent in urine. Dried skin particles (commonly referred to as "dander") may contain the offending protein, but the allergen is not an integral part of dander or the coat itself. Consequently, shaving the cat will not lessen the reaction.

The amount of allergen present does not differ from breed to breed, although there are definitely differences between individual cats. Unfortunately, besides trial and error, there is no positive way of identifying a cat that will set off symptoms.

There are several effective ways to deal with a cat allergy.

Spray-on anti-allergy substances, or specially designed bath potions, shampoos or cream rinses, work on some cats for some allergy sufferers. Bear in mind that bathing the cat every week will dry out the skin, and can ultimately increase protein secretions. Daily brushing or combing removes much of the hair and dander that may contain the allergenic protein. Obviously, someone who isn't allergic to the cat should do the duty, and if possible do it outside.

A change in the cat's diet can be helpful. **Omega-3 fatty acids** added to the diet will keep the skin supple and healthy. Moreover, many people who have put their cats on natural, homemade diets report that their allergies have diminished or even vanished. The oral tranquilizer Acepromazine can be given at ultra-low doses in the cat's food, and provides relief for a great many allergy sufferers.

Environmental management is important. The allergenic proteins are very tiny and can hang in the air or collect on porous materials such as draperies and carpet, so fabrics in the home should be limited. An ordinary vacuum simply blows the tiny allergen proteins around the room; get one with a micro-filtration device. When dusting, the use of spray furniture polish dramatically reduces allergen particles becoming airborne. Spraying directly onto the surface, rather than onto the dustcloth, works best. Someone besides the allergic person should be doing the cleaning.

Another effective device is a high efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter. These filters can remove nearly 100% of the allergens from the room in which they are placed. Ionic air filtration devices have also shown much promise in trapping small protein particles. Several filters may be necessary in a large home. However, while filtration reduces allergen levels, it may take considerable time to show an effect.

Personal cleanliness is crucial for the allergy sufferer. Hands must be washed with soap and water after every contact with the cat. Washing

machines are capable of removing most cat allergen from fabrics. Dry cleaning is reasonably effective at removing cat allergen from non-washable fabrics.

It is rare for someone to be allergic to only one protein. A visit to an allergist may be prudent. Potential treatment options include over the counter and prescription medication and immunotherapy, also called hyposensitization. Alternative therapies include [Nambudripad's Allergy Elimination Technique \(NAET\)](#) and [Emotional Freedom Techniques \(EFT\)](#). Both of these therapies use acupuncture points and meridians to reduce or eliminate allergies.

An allergy need not require giving up your cat! All of these steps, used alone or in conjunction with one another, have prevented the disruption of the human-animal bond for many families. Yours could be another success story!