



ALLERGY TO CATS & DOGS



WHAT IS CAT AND/OR DOG ALLERGY?

The allergy-causing material from cats/dogs is not actually cat/dog hair, but instead a protein in the dander and saliva of cats/dogs. The allergens become airborne as microscopic particles which, when inhaled into the nose or lungs can produce nasal allergies and can trigger asthma. Cat/dog allergen is present to the greatest extent in homes with cats/dogs, but has also been found in homes where cats/dogs have never been present and in offices and public spaces where animals are not allowed. Cat/dog allergen is particularly sticky and is carried on clothing. It is almost impossible not to be exposed to some level of cat/dog allergen. The level of exposure will be much higher where cats/dogs are present, and these levels are more likely to cause allergy symptoms.

WHAT CAN BE DONE TO REDUCE EXPOSURE TO CAT AND/OR DOG ALLERGEN?

The best way to reduce exposure to cat/dog allergen is to find a new home for the pet. If this is unacceptable the cat/dog should be strictly kept out of the allergic patient's bedroom and living areas. Keeping the cat/dog outside is an alternative and will reduce cat/dog allergen. After removing the cat/dog from the home cat/dog allergen levels may still remain at levels that cause symptoms to allergic individuals for up to 4-6 months.

AVOIDANCE MEASURES FOR CAT AND/OR DOG ALLERGEN

- ❖ Remove the cat/dog from the house.
- ❖ Measures to reduce allergen if cat/dog remains at home.
 - Reduce reservoirs for cat/dog allergen (carpets, sofas, etc.).
 - Use vacuum cleaners with an effective filtration system.
 - Bathe the cat/dog every week.
 - Increase ventilation or use air filtration to remove small airborne particles. Use a HEPA air cleaner. HEPA stands for high efficiency particulate air filter. The HEPA air cleaner can remove airborne allergen particles. Choose the appropriate model for your bedroom size.