

Allergic to Dogs?

This is less common than for Cats but still can occur.



Steps Can Be Taken to Reduce Dog Allergens

Many people will ignore both chronic allergy symptoms and specific medical advice in order to keep the family dog.

Who Is Susceptible?

Allergies to dogs can strike anyone at any age. Most people that suffer from dog allergies often have other mild or moderate allergies to pollens or molds. There is a strong genetic correlation in developing allergies, so if your parents have allergies then you are likely to have them also.

Is Any Dog Safe?

No dog is considered non-allergenic because all dogs produce dander, saliva, and urine which are the offending allergens. Any dog who sheds skin, urinates, or licks has the potential to become a problem for an allergic individual.

There are dogs that produce less dander, however. For instance, dogs that shed their skin about every 21 days include poodles, airedales, and schnauzers. 🐶

Whereas, breeds like cocker spaniels, basset hounds, German shepherds, and Irish setters shed their skin every three to four days.

Dander can be controlled on most breeds with the proper diet, bathing, and grooming.

Symptoms

Dog allergens can produce nasal congestion, runny nose, itchy nose, sneezing, itchy and watery eyes, coughing, a scratchy sore throat, itchy skin rashes or hives, headaches, fatigue, difficulties in breathing, and asthma.

Helpful Tips

Be sure to always wash your hands after each time you touch or play with a dog. You may even want to shower and change your clothing.

Dog allergens are small and sticky and can stay airborne for a long time. They can adhere to walls, clothing, carpet, furniture, and heating and cooling ducts. For this reason, it is best to keep dogs away from the bedroom or any other rooms you spend a lot of time.

Avoid using heavy carpets, large draperies, and upholstered pieces that become collecting grounds for pet allergen. If you have carpet, steam clean it several times a year. Wash walls and baseboards also.

The use of HEPA room air cleaners and replacing central heating/cooling system air filters frequently can help reduce the allergen in the air. Dr. Robert Nathan recommends placing a screen made of cheesecloth or other thin material over bedroom vents to keep dander from circulating into the bedroom from the central heating/cooling system.

Research has shown that if a dog is washed and brushed frequently (not more than twice weekly), the airborne allergens are cut drastically. This task should be done outside of the home. Be sure the shampoo you use does not dry out the dog's skin which may worsen the problem. Remember to also wash the dog's bedding and toys.

Feed your dog a well-balanced diet which includes some natural fat that helps reduce skin dryness and flaking

Treatment

As with any allergy, avoidance is the main course of treatment. A dog-allergic individual should avoid being around dogs at all times.

If you are visiting a person with a dog it may be necessary to take Allergy eye drops eg. Sodium Cromoglycate (Opticrom) before you go to the house. If you have asthma induced by cats, ensure you have your Inhaler with you.

From [Judy Tidwell](http://allergies.about.com/cs/dogs), website <http://allergies.about.com/cs/dogs>