

Pet Allergies



Household pets including cats, dogs, rodents, and birds can present special problems

for people with allergies. Many people with cat allergies think they are allergic to the animal's fur. It is actually a protein within the pet's saliva and dander (skin flakes) that is the cause of their trouble. When cats groom themselves, they deposit saliva onto their fur and skin. Large amounts of dander

become airborne when the animal rubs against furniture and when you brush or pet them. This substance is very difficult to remove from an environment. Dander also contributes to another allergy problem. It serves as a food supply for dust mites. Although the fur of a dog or cat is not a major allergen, it will collect pollen, dust, mold, and other irritants.

Someone with allergies or asthma should **not** keep a pet in their house. Although it is both physically and emotionally difficult, **finding the pet a new home, is the best solution!** Even isolating the pet to a small area or keeping the pet outdoors, does not guarantee a

dander-free home. Air currents, from central heating and air conditioning or fans, will spread pet allergen throughout the house. Dander can also be brought back in on the body and clothing of other people.

1. Find the pet a new home!
2. If this is not possible, keep your pet outdoors.
3. **Never** allow the pet into the bedroom of the allergic individual!
4. Wash the pet every week to reduce the amount of airborne dander.

Pollen Allergies



Pollen, a very common allergen, is the cause of "seasonal allergic rhinitis" or "hay fever." During the seasons when

plants are pollinating, people who are sensitive will develop allergic reactions. Most pollens are light enough to be windborne and can penetrate anywhere, indoors and out. The hay fever season can be a different time of year for

different people. This is because trees, grasses, and weeds produce pollens during different seasons.

Symptoms from pollen allergies include a stuffy and watery nose, redness, swelling and itching of the eyes, an itchy nose, throat, and mouth, and itching of the ears. By avoiding substances that cause reactions, it is possible to control hay fever. You can still enjoy times of high pollination by using a few simple precautions:

1. Keep windows closed and run the air conditioner.
2. Clean or replace air conditioner filters

regularly.

3. Avoid exercising outdoors especially during the early morning hours when pollen counts are highest.
4. Use a clothes dryer instead of drying your clothes outdoors.
5. Take a shower and wash hair each night. This will remove pollen, keeping it off your pillow.
6. Wear a pollen and dust mask when working in the yard and garden.
7. Keep the landscaping around your home neat and tidy as pollen and mold will accumulate on weeds and other debris.

Mold Allergies



Mold is a form of fungus, which is in the plant family. It survives on and eats tiny amounts of decomposing plant or animal

matter. Among the most widespread living organism, mold reproduces by releasing spores into the air. They settle on organic matter and grow into new mold clusters. It is these spores that trigger allergic reactions when inhaled.

Indoors, the mold spore season is year round. Mold thrives in dark, warm, humid areas of the home including bathroom walls, shower stalls, pillows, mattresses, under carpeting, unwashed clothes, refrigerator drain pans, air conditioners, and humidifiers.

Plant soil, concrete, the inside of garbage cans, damp basements, and attics also harbor mold. Outdoors, mold spores may also be present in the air all year, except when snow covers the ground. Individuals sensitive to mold should avoid exposure to fallen leaves, cut grass, compost piles, rotting wood, barns, and especially areas that don't see much sunshine.

If you have been diagnosed with a mold allergy, the following tips are essential:

1. Reduce the humidity level in your home to below 50% by using air conditioner or a dehumidifier.
2. Clean surfaces where mold grows and use an inhibitor to prevent future mold growth.
3. Never steam clean carpeting. Moisture trapped in the carpet padding will create a haven for mold growth. It is best to

remove carpeting from the bedroom.

4. Have someone mow the lawn and rake leaves for you.
5. If you must work out in the yard, wear a high quality mask for protection.
6. Do not hang clothing outdoors. This makes an attractive landing surface for airborne mold spores.
7. Potted plants that require moist soil should not be kept indoors.
8. If you use a humidifier during the dry season, be careful not to **over** humidify.
9. Since we all perspire, change your pillow every year. Be sure to use a pillow with an agent that will inhibit the growth of mold or mildew. Wash pillows regularly.
10. Be sure your clothes dryer is well vented to the outdoors.

