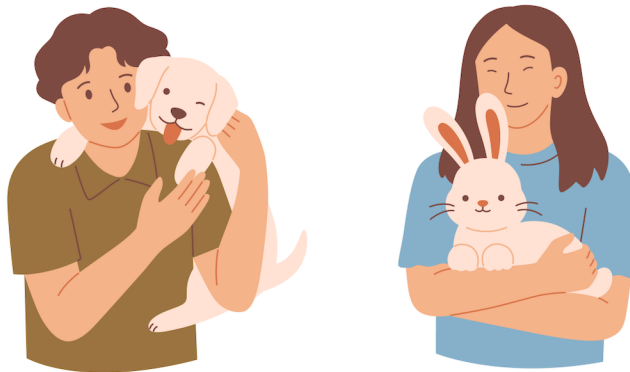


Allergy To Animals

Overview

The major sources of animal allergens are household pets such as cats, dogs, hamsters, birds, and rabbits etc. Animal allergens not only come from tiny scales of skin (dander) normally shed by animals, but also their dried saliva and urine. Like mould and house dust mite allergens, animal allergens circulate throughout the homes as part of house dust.



What is the prevalence?

The prevalence is about 15% of the population but for asthmatic patients, the percentage increases to 30%.

Avoidance

Although it may be emotionally upsetting, successful control of your allergy means the removal of a pet animal from your home as well as the surrounding area. However, there are other ways to minimize exposure to the allergens from your pet.



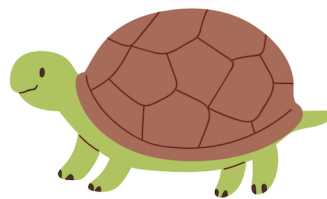
If you are not highly allergic:

- Discourage the pet from licking you.
- Keep your pet out of bedrooms, both during the day and at night.
- Bathing the animal weekly can reduce the number of allergens that are given off into the environment.
- Brush the animal outside the house and ask non-allergic family members to clean the animal's litter box.
- Regular cleaning of your home. However, the allergic person should wear a mask while cleaning, or be out of house while somebody else does the cleaning.
- Carpet should be avoided. The best floors are wooden, vinyl, linoleum that can be washed regularly.
- Use washable bedding, wash frequently and beat or hose down outside the house.
- Use a vacuum cleaner with filter to remove allergens embedded in furniture and curtains.



If you are extremely sensitive:

- Total avoidance is necessary. Avoid keeping a furry pet if you have a baby or young child, and have a strong family tendency to allergy to animals.
- Implement rigorous cleaning program to remove existing traces of allergens adhered to flooring and walls even if the pet has not been in the room for some time.
- Beware of travelling in an animal owner's car and visiting their home.
- When visiting friends with an animal, it is better to leave your coats and jackets outside.
- Avoid moving into somewhere where pet-owners lived previously.
- Check whether pets are allowed entry when choosing holiday accommodation.
- Try a goldfish, tropical fish, or turtle as a pet -- they are allergy free!



Contributed by Nursing

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