



## Allergy & Asthma Center

of Southern Oregon, PC

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### ANIMAL ALLERGIES

The proteins found in a pet's dander (scales from hair, feathers, or skin), saliva and urine can cause runny nose, stuffy nose, itchy eyes, and/or sneezing, as well as aggravate asthma symptoms in some people. Also, pet hair or fur can collect pollen, mold spores and other outdoor allergens.

Contrary to popular opinion, multiple scientific research studies have demonstrated there are no truly "hypoallergenic" breeds of dogs or cats. All cats and dogs produce allergen and this is not affected by length of hair or fur, the size of the animal, nor by the amount of shedding.

The most effective way to minimize allergy symptoms is to avoid the allergen(s) causing the symptoms. Medications are often used. Please refer to your medication plan for details.

Older patients with severe symptoms unresponsive to optimal medical management may be candidates for allergy shots (immunotherapy). Allergy shots have a proven track record as an effective form of long-term treatment.

If your pet will remain in the home, here are some strategies to consider to help reduce allergen exposure:

- Keeping pets out of your bedroom at all times. Kids spend a lot of time in this room. Try not to have your child take stuffed animals out of the bedroom where they could collect allergen and bring it back into the bedroom.
- Keep your pet off of upholstered furniture.
- Have someone who doesn't have allergies brush the pet regularly—outside, not indoors.
- Bathe the pets once to twice per week if possible.
- Use a double or micro-filter bag in the vacuum to reduce the amount of pet allergen present in carpeting that leaks back into the room air.
- If you have a HEPA air cleaner, try to place this in the child's bedroom near the doorway.
- Remove carpeting and rugs, which can trap pet dander and other allergens.
- Keep the pet exclusively outside of the home.

If these strategies fail, it may be necessary to find a new home for the pet. It can take six months or more after the pet is gone for allergen levels to recede to levels seen in homes that do not own cats or dogs.

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