



ALLERGIES TO PETS...

Way too often I come across situations where pet owners want to re-home their pets because of allergies.

And way too often when I talk to pet owners I come to find out that the reason of why they want to re-home their pets is because their doctor said it was the cat or the dog that is causing the allergy.

I can personally relate to the above as when I first started with my allergies. My allergist asked me:

Do you have cats?

I said: Yes

So he said:

Well, the first thing you have to do is get rid of your cats!!!

What is very upsetting to me is that some doctors are quick to blame the cat or the dog or whatever animal in the household for people's allergies and they do nothing to back up such a statement, like the underlined above.

Meaning that before performing any allergy test of any kind, they just right off the bat tell patients that is the animal causing the problem.

It is more upsetting when Doctors tell parents of New born babies that their baby's allergy is due to the cat!

And I say the cat because it is usually the cat that is to blame.

It is a fact that an allergic reaction begins with the body recognizing the foreign particle (called an allergen) through the use of special proteins called immunoglobulins (IgE). The body can make a very specific IgE protein for each specific allergen.

Baby's immune system is not fully functioning, so the IgE they have does not necessarily work.

Baby's also have not been alive long enough to be exposed to the allergens, become sensitized, and produce enough IgE to cause symptoms. It takes time to build up enough IgE to have allergic reactions, the period to be known is longer than a year.

With the above being said it is nearly impossible that new born babies can develop allergies to pets or allergies at all.

In most cases baby's allergies are due to food.

Studies from the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious diseases show that:

Children raised in a house with two or more dogs or cats during the first year of life may be less likely to develop allergic diseases as compared with children raised without pets
<http://www3.niaid.nih.gov/news/newsreleases/2002/petallergyrsk.htm>

Unfortunately cats are more likely to be blame for causing allergies in households than dogs.

What is cat allergy:

The real culprit appears to be cat saliva which contains an allergen that is a protein called Fel d 1. When a cat washes itself, saliva is deposited on its fur.

The saliva dries into dust (dander or dandruff) which is released when a cat scratches or moves and when humans stroke or brush a cat.

All cats wash, even those that lack hair altogether.

The dust forms on all types of cat hair or directly on the cat's skin if it lacks fur this being the case with hairless Sphynx cats.

Although the term "hypoallergenic" means "reduced allergens", many people misunderstand it to mean "allergen-free".

Contrary to what people believe there are no "non-allergenic" breeds of dogs or cats; even hairless breeds may be highly allergenic.

Breeds such as Poodles for example can be less irritating to people, probably because they are bathed and groomed more often.

Lets say per instance that a person is truly allergic to pets.

When a person has allergies to something regardless of what it is, usually the individual is given allergy shots, what the person is injected with is exactly the substance/allergen that the person is allergic to, so the individual will build imunity to the allergen over time.

The reason of why I am saying this is because in case of pet allergies is the same concept, if you know what I mean.

See the longer you keep the pet, the more immunity you will build to Fluffy or Fido, you may suffer a little at first, but isn't it well worth it if you had your pets for a long time, and you love them.

For instance many people are allergic to house dust and dust mites, even if you were to move to a new house, the new house will well over time collect dust and dust mites all over again, what do we do, we just cannot keep moving around, so we take medication, shots,

etc. so we can build immunity to what we are allergic to, but we do not decide to be homeless and live on the streets because the dust that accumulates in the house. Right?

So why can you practice the same above when it comes to your pet, so you, your allergy and your pets can all live together for many years to come?

Sadly they are many pet owners that re-home their pets without having an allergy test done and after the pet is gone they come to face the fact that their allergies were NOT pet relate it.

Please remember that rescue groups and shelters are often full and might not be able to

take your pet in immediately.

Doctors which are anti-pet or anti-cat are more likely to say "get rid of the cat", though the real cause may later be shown to be house-mites, pollen or chemicals in the environment.

By then, it will be too late to retrieve your pet from a shelter or its new home or, worse, it may have been destroyed.

With that being said, pets and allergic pet owners can live happily ever after, all in the same household, it just requires some commitment, will and most of all TOLERANCE.

Are you READY to work it out?

SUGGESTIONS FOR PET ALLERGIES.

1. BEFORE REHOMING YOUR PET DUE TO ALLERGIES,

PLEASE HAVE YOUR DOCTOR TO DO A SPECIFIC ALLERGY TEST FOR PET DANDRUFF.

2. Switch your clay litter to Feline Pine or any other non-clay litter,

The above may not seem important but it has magically cured allergies in many people that have contacted me that want it to re-home their cats.

Clay litter puts a lot of dust in the air you breathe and also on your pet, it is really not good for neither of you.

3. Wash your hands immediately after you touch your cat to avoid transferring allergens directly from your cat to your eyes, mouth, or skin.

4. Clean. Allergens accumulate and it takes a large amount to produce a reaction in most people, so cleaning and dusting your home every week will reduce your symptoms. Try using a hypoallergenic dusting cloth, which uses static electricity to trap dust particles, instead of dispersing them into the air the way a feather duster would.

5. Brush your cat to remove loose hair and dried saliva. Remove the hair from the brush immediately and put it into a closed trash can.

6. Bathe your cat. If you begin bathing your cat as a kitten and use only very gentle shampoos designed for cats, she may learn to tolerate it.

Please do not leave your cat wet, after bathing, blow dry.

Note: When bathing the cat, do the final rinse with distilled water to wash away dried saliva dust.

Tap water leaves residues on the cat's fur and may make matters worse.

7. Wipe your cat daily with a washcloth, DO NOT use moist towels containing ALOE or

TEA TREE OIL as it is highly TOXIC to cats.

8. Here is something you can get RID of-Your carpet. Carpets can hold allergens for years.

Also wooden and metal furniture is much easier to clean and keep dust free than plush couches and chairs. You can try tie-on washable chair cushions, and toss them into the wash every couple weeks.

9. Buy washable curtains and blinds, and wash them on a regular basis.

10. Place filters or cheese cloths over all vents, and then wash or replace them frequently.

11. Buy an air purifier. Everyone, whether they are allergic to cats or not, can benefit from the addition of an air filter to their home. These filters will remove allergen particles from the air. HEPA air filters work very well.

12. Create and allergy free zone preferably in your bedroom.

13. Hire someone else to clean your home or ask a non-allergic family member to dust and sweep.

Some allergy sufferers find that they have reactions while cleaning, or that they are simply too busy to clean as well as they should.

Try allergy-reducing pet sprays (LoShed and Allerpet). These are new products and so there aren't many reports or articles on their effectiveness, but they are supposed to reduce dander and shedding, which in turn reduces the number of allergens released into the air.

14. Look into allergy treatments. There are a variety of over the counter and prescription medicines on the market for allergies. Many people report that these medications work well for them, and this has the added benefit of treating all of your allergies at once. You can also get allergy shots from your doctor, but the shots must be administered frequently in the beginning.

Many people are having great success with acupuncture and homeopathic medicine.

Many owners tolerate mild allergies.

Those whose symptoms worsen during moulting seasons find that antihistamine tablets, nasal sprays. can help during these seasons..

15. Designate a room in your house only for the cat or dog and restrict access to the rest of the house.

In warm weather climates, outdoor enclosures/screen in porches work very well for cats.

If you are absolutely positive that you are allergic to pets or to your pets and you DO NOT want to bother and decide to re-home them.

Please keep these things in mind.

1. NEVER OFFER YOUR PET "FREE TO GOOD"

If you do your pet could easily end up in a research lab or it can be used as bait for people who are engaged in dog fights.

There is good people out there, but there is also bad, so be careful and always charge an adoption fee, even if it is small.

2. If you decide to turn your pet into a shelter, please keep in mind that in kill shelters, owner surrender pets are the first ones to be killed, regardless of color, sex or age.

3. Do seek a rescue group to help you place your pet(s).

Many rescue groups are No Kill, so chances are they all full, however since your allergies are most likely NOT going to be gone as soon as you get rid of your pet, please try to work with a rescue group and keep your pet, until a good responsible adopter comes along.

4. Please before re-homing your pet please be sure is SPAY OR NEUTERED.

On another note:

If you are absolutely positive that you are allergic to pets, but always want it to have one.

Below are some things you can do.

1. Volunteer at a shelter or rescue group.

2. Walk a dog or take care of a cat for a neighbor or family member, if they are sick or when they go on vacation.

3. Sponsor a homeless pet at a shelter or rescue group, this way you will contribute to its upkeep and you can visit the pet as often as you like, for short periods of time so it will not cause much discomfort.

4. If you have an enclosed patio or a screen porch, you may be able to have a pet after all.

Why NOT adopt a FERAL cat.

Feral cats enjoy the company of humans but they do not want to be handle, they do need food and shelter and they are happiest outdoors.

If you do not have an enclosed area then perhaps you can build one.

Give it a try it is very rewarding.

Celene Albano

HPR Rescue CEO