

Why Am I Allergic to Cats?

Cat allergies are caused by the proteins in the cat's urine and saliva. These proteins are also found in cat dander, which are dry flakes of skin found in the fur. If you are allergic to cats and decide to get one, then you'll be happy to learn most people tend to build up a tolerance to these allergens over time. There are also specific regimens allergic people can follow, as well as medication to help alleviate their symptoms.

How Can I Learn to Deal with Cat Allergies?

If you or one of your loved ones are allergic to cats and are not helped by medication, what can you do? Other than replacing your loved ones (this is not usually recommended) or rehoming your cat, there are some ways to reduce the effects of allergens in your home.

- Clean, clean, clean. People don't understand how much of a difference a cat's daily grooming and a thorough house sweeping can make when dealing with cat allergies. Keep the surface and floors as fur-free as possible, and the reactions to the cat's allergens should also diminish. Floors and carpets can especially be a haven for the cat's hair and dander, so vacuum them often and take the rugs out for cleaning – preferably more than once every spring.
- Another way to reduce the effect of cat allergens is to try (emphasis on "try") and bathe the cat every four to six weeks using a cat shampoo. This will help remove the cat's dander building up, extra hair, and saliva, which contains a natural deodorant and cleaning agent that causes allergic reactions. Rinsing the cat is important and may prove difficult, as most cats don't like being in water. Combine that with its claws and agility, and you may be in some emergency room type of trouble. But seriously, have a trusted friend or family member sponge bathe the cat while you hold it down.
- An air purifier can sometimes be a great weapon against allergens. It will help remove impurities from the environment and although more expensive, a commercial purifier usually works better than a regular one. Routinely brushing the cat's hair will also reduce the amount of fur (and thus dander) floating in the air.
- While not always practical, going to a doctor for an allergic exam can be advantageous. As there are many household items which can initiate an allergic reaction, this test will help sort out the underlying cause(s). It is more of a trial and error type of test, but can work wonders at determining the allergic agents quickly.

Using a combination of these methods – or even all of them – should greatly reduce the number of allergens in the air, and hopefully make your home a sniffles-free zone.