

Say 'Goodbye' to Kitty Allergies, Not to Kitty

by Beth Stannard (Maine Coon Adoptions)

The CDC states that owning a pet can decrease blood pressure, cholesterol levels, triglyceride levels, and feelings of loneliness. However, millions of pet owners are allergic to their furry friends. Fortunately, you can overcome cat allergies!

Understanding Allergens

Protein "Fel-d I", the cat allergen, is the major cause of allergic reactions to cats. During a kitty's self-cleaning process, Fel-d I in the saliva is deposited on the fur. It is also produced by sebaceous glands (the skin glands that secrete the protective oils that keep skin and hair sleek and shiny). As kitty plays, cuddles, jumps, and does all normal cat behaviors, allergens are deposited in the environment. Cat allergens are very tiny and easily stick to surfaces. Male cats usually produce more allergen than females, and cats that are neutered and spayed produced far less allergen than those that aren't.

Allergies are usually cumulative. Since an allergic person is sensitive to more than one thing, it is the *total allergen level* that causes a reaction. Whether or not a person has symptoms depends on how many allergens are in the environment at the same time. *An individual who is allergic to animals may exhibit no noticeable symptoms when the total exposure is below his allergy threshold level.* The trouble begins when there are enough allergens in the environment to exceed this level. The goal is to minimize exposure to airborne allergens that exceed tolerance thresholds and trigger attacks.

Minimizing Allergens

With a spouse once severely allergic to a beloved feline family member, I've had first-hand experience with the frustration of pet allergies, and more importantly, with defeating them!

Below is everything I've tried. No one product alone will work - remember, allergies are cumulative. Every solution added will cut back about 5-10% of the allergic reaction.

- Do not let kitty in the bedroom of the allergic individual, ever.
- Steam clean hard floors (using a device like the Bissell Steam Mop) once per week.
- Spray FeBreeze Allergen Reducer on absorbent fabrics like the sofa, drapes, etc. a couple times per week.
- Spray Allersearch ADMS Anti-Allergy Carpet Treatment every 4 weeks before vacuuming.
- Vacuum only when the allergic individual is not home and open windows for about 2 hours after vacuuming.
- Get a vacuum with a HEPA filter (we chose the Sebo Automatic X4 Extra Upright since it's super lightweight - it is kind of pricey though, and there are several other cheap solutions you can try first if you don't already have a HEPA vacuum).
- Spray Allersearch AllerDust Dust Removal Spray on your cleaning rag/duster before dusting.
- Bathe kitty with Allersearch Pet Shampoo every 3-6 weeks (I had a professional groomer do this the first three times so kitty could get used to it. Now he's fine to let us bathe him at home in the kitchen sink).
- Wipe down kitty with Allerpet/C Solution half way between shampoos to denature the proteins causing the allergies.
- Add Allersearch Allergen Wash to your laundry, in every load, and wash in warmest temp allowable by fabrics.
- Change the bed sheets of the allergic individual every week and wash in hot water, if possible.
- Encase the mattress, box spring, pillows and comforter of the allergic individual (Pristine COMPLETE at the website below). Since cat proteins are suuuuper tiny and sticky, you'll need the highest grade one (which is unfortunately also the most expensive - but it makes a huge difference in the quality of sleep!)
- If you have central heating, replace your current filter with an Allergy-Free Aller-Pure Gold Permanent Filter (and rinse every 4 weeks) - this is actually quite cost effective since it's good for 10 years!
- Place Allergy-Free Vent Filtration Kit filters in vents of the bedroom of the allergic individual (and change monthly).
- Buy an Alen A350 HEPA filter (even kept on a low setting all the time helps in the bedroom of the allergic individual): http://www.consumersearch.com/www/house_and_home/air-purifiers/index.html

I buy most products from this website <http://www.allergycontrol.com>. They send frequent catalogs in the mail with special offers and coupon codes, so the prices are reasonable.

I'm eternally grateful for all of these non-toxic allergy solutions above.

Without them, we'd be without our beloved kitty!



Author with her kitty, Stewie