

EAR, NOSE, THROAT AND ALLERGY CENTER
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THE TRUTH ABOUT CATS

No! There are no hypoallergenic cat breeds.

- The prefix "hypo" means "less than" and thus the word hypoallergenic tells the kitten/cat buyer that the breeder believes the cat will produce fewer allergens than other cats. How is this measured or regulated - well it isn't. There are no legal regulations defining allergens (let alone allergens in cats), nor are there any guidelines. So the world "hypoallergenic" has very little meaning.
- Around 2-15% of the world's population is allergic to cats and 1/3 of these have a cat in their home.
- Up to 40% of Asthma sufferers are sensitive to cats.
- A large proportion of cats surrendered to shelters are from allergic pet owners.
- Up to 25% of Rex cats that are in need of assistance from rescue organizations are there because their new owners cannot cope with their allergic reaction to their Rex cat. Cats bought because of their so-called hypoallergenic nature.
- Considerable allergen variation exists between cats and at differing.
- Allergic symptoms may not occur until there have been several days or weeks of continuous exposure to the cat.
- Male cats produce more allergen than female cats and neutered males produce less than non-neutered males (but not always).
- Kittens produce less allergen than adult cats.
- A study of 321 patients with allergies showed that dark-colored cats were 4 times more likely to cause more sneezing, wheezing and overall allergy-symptom than light-colored cats did.
- Another study showed cat allergen levels in domestic living rooms are not related to cat color or hair length.
- Woolen sweaters retain more cat allergens than cotton tops even after washing.

What causes the Allergies? The primary cause of allergic reactions to cats is caused by allergens found in the cat sebaceous glands in the cat's skin, such as the allergenic glycoprotein called Fel D1 (short for "Felis domesticus"), it is also secreted via saliva in lesser

quantities. When cats lick themselves, they spread this protein, which is rather sticky, and glues itself onto dust particles, the home, your clothing and their fur; whether it's long, short, straight, curly, or absent. As all cats have sebaceous glands, all cat breeds can potentially cause allergies. Allergic allergens are also found in the feces, serum, urine, mucous, dander, and hair roots of the cat.

Cat allergen is incredibly pervasive and even after the cat has been removed, the cat allergen can remain throughout the home for up to 6 months and up to 4 years in the cats bedding. The allergen has been found in almost 1/3 of non-cat owner's homes and on the clothing of co-workers who don't own any cats, and in schools. And yes, they even found cat allergen in the Antarctic (where no cat has ever been). Cat allergen is about 10 times smaller than pollen or dust particles it is so small that it easily penetrates the bronchial membranes.

How can I reduce allergen levels in my home and cat?

- Washing your cat 2 times a week has shown to help reduce the allergen levels. Ensuring that you wash and rinse it well. Studies have shown that the accumulation of Fel d1 on the skin is restored within two days.
- Fel d 1 levels on the skin of the cat are dramatically higher on the facial area than chest. Make sure you wash that face well.
- The use of allergy wipes such as Allerpet, has proved effective in reduces cat allergens on the cat and thus your home (studies showed that it was effective for around 80% of its users).
- Ensure your cat is spayed or neutered.
- Wash your hands after handling your cat and refrain from touching your face or eyes.
- Wash clothes frequently and wear more cotton and less wool.
- Keep the house as clean as possible by washing floors and bed linen often with hot water to eliminate the allergens.
- Wash clothes and bed linen using detergent solutions at 25°C (77°F) for at least 5 minutes - to extract cat allergen from bedding and clothing.
- Use dusting sprays whist dusting to minimize dust spread.
- Carpet is more likely to hold allergens - so if you can remove it in favor of wood, vinyl or tile floors.
- Avoid heavy drapes that trap the allergens and dust.
- Keep the cat out of your bedroom and laundry (keep it off your clean clothes) and provide it with its own bed.
- Minimize other allergens in the house such as smoke, dust, moulds, scented candles, chemicals and pollens etc. Multiple allergens are linked to the development of more

severe allergic reactions and asthma.

- Create outdoor enclosures for your cat so it can spend some time outside and not confined to an enclosed house and you get some fresh air in your home.
- Keep the cat litter in a well-ventilated area and dip rather than pour when you empty it and use litter that is as dust free as possible.
- Use high-efficiency air cleaners, either central or portable.