



Caring Hands Humane Society

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Cat Allergies

Some studies have shown that if a child tests positive to pollen and dust mites, but *NOT* for cat dander, giving away the cat may lead to the child *BECOMING* allergic to cats. In fact, one study showed that fewer kids with a pet in the house develop asthma than children with no pet in the house. Exposing children early in life to dust, dander and other allergens will help the body build up immunity to them, much like vaccinations.

There are many reasons why an allergy is present and the cat may not be the culprit. An allergist (preferably one who loves cats!) can rule out other causes, and can also prescribe allergy medications that may make a world of difference.

If you are truly allergic to cats there is a lot you can do to manage the symptoms.

- Get rid of carpeting. Not only are hard wood floors infinitely more stylish, but carpeting harbors allergens—as much as 100 times the amount as bare floors.
- Use a HEPA air filter in the rooms where Fluffy spends most of her time
- Make your bedroom a “cat free” zone
- Wash kitty’s bedding (and your own) regularly
- You can let the sunshine and fresh air in by opening windows
- Put window fans in your house on exhaust
- Brush your kitty outside so that the dander flies away
- Take allergy shots
- Replace upholstery with vinyl which will keep allergens from accumulating

But first and foremost, don’t rush out and get rid of the family pet. Cats are great for many reasons. They are cute. They are cuddly. They are the perfect antidote to loneliness, boredom, and depression. And now, thanks to new studies, they might even help “vaccinate” your children against asthma—another good reason to keep the cat.

CHHS Staff