

## Controlling Asthma Triggers: Animals



Having allergies to animals can trigger asthma flare-ups. Your healthcare provider may test you for allergies to several types of animals, both pets and pests. The allergies are caused by an animal's dry skin flakes (dander), feathers, droppings, urine, and saliva. If you are allergic to pets or other animals, you can do some things to lessen your symptoms.

### Keeping your home clean

- Dust often with a damp cloth to reduce pet dander.
- Keep your pets off of your bed and out of your bedroom. You spend a big part of each day there sleeping. But even if you keep your pet out of the bedroom, pet allergens will be there. When you sit on the couch in the living room and then go into the bedroom, you bring the allergens with you.
- Keep your pets off of upholstered furniture such as sofas and chairs. Keep them out of rooms with carpeting.
- Use a special bag for your vacuum. Or use a vacuum designed to reduce pet dander and hair on carpeting.
- Think about buying a home air cleaner with a HEPA (high-efficiency particulate air) filter. They help to remove allergens in the air.
- Keep your kitchen clean and free of food crumbs. Don't leave food crumbs elsewhere in the house. These can attract mice and other pests. These pests can trigger asthma.
- If possible, give your pet weekly baths to reduce the amount of allergens.
- For rodents, wear a dust mask and gloves. Also don't have contact with soiled cages.



### Away from home

- You may have to stay out of homes with pets. Even if the pets are outdoors during a visit, the dander stays in the house.
- When spending the night somewhere, ask to sleep in a room where pets aren't allowed.

## Choosing a pet

If you are thinking about getting a new pet, know that:

- For people with allergies to dogs and cats, it is not the length of the fur or coat or the amount of shedding that matters. All dogs and cats have dander. No dog or cat is completely allergen-free.
- Fish and reptiles don't cause allergies.

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