

Coping with Allergies to Pets

Have you developed an allergy and you think your pet might be the source? Many people feel forced to give up their pet when they develop allergies. Before you take such a drastic step, you might want to try some or all of the following:



- Have an allergy test done to see if you are actually allergic to the animal. Though your pet may seem the likely cause of your distress, a medical specialist may be able to pinpoint the source more accurately.
- Keep the animal out of your bedroom.
- Try one of the allergy relief products available at pet supply stores and over the Internet. For example, you can buy pre-moistened cloths that quickly wipe away the pet dander and loose hair that can cause human allergic reactions around pets.
- Use an air filtration system or air purifier.
- Vacuum the house and furniture completely and often. You could try using a special vacuum filter that removes dander and other allergens.
- Use washable scatter rugs in your home, rather than wall-to-wall carpet.
- Wash your pet weekly and groom your pet often.
- Wash your hands immediately after petting the animal.
- Wash bedspreads, sheets, throw rugs, and slip covers frequently.
- Add a coat conditioner to your pet's food to prevent skin dryness, which can increase shedding.
- Consult your doctor about allergy shots or medication to control the allergy symptoms.

Even if your pet is the cause of your allergy, remember that your pet, who has been your friend over the years, is truly depending upon you now. If you can invest the time and effort to find ways to cope with your allergy, your pet can stay where he or she belongs – at home with you.

If you have tried all the possible solutions to no avail, and you decide that you need to find a new home for your pet, our guide called *How to Find Homes for Homeless Pets* (available for download as a PDF) will provide helpful advice on ensuring that your pet ends up in a good new home.