

## Human Allergies to Dogs

**Some people may have allergies to dogs but that doesn't stop them from having a dog as part of the family.**

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Many people have allergies to dogs. Symptoms of allergies include sneezing; coughing; red, itchy, watery eyes and nose; scratchy or sore throat; and wheezing or breathing difficulty.

If an allergy specialist has diagnosed you or a family member with a dog allergy, it doesn't mean you have to give up your pet. You can discuss the possibility of allergy shots or medication with your doctor, but there also are ways to reduce the allergens in your dog and your home so that you can continue to live happily with your beloved dog:

Keep at least one room of the house dog-free. The bedroom is the best choice to ensure a good nights sleep free of allergens. But if you have forced air heating and air conditioning in your home, the air currents may still spread the allergens throughout the house. Fit your home with a central air purifier that uses a HEPA (high-efficiency particulate arresting) filter and use it at least four hours a day to remove a significant amount of pet allergens.

Vacuum floors and furniture frequently using a machine with a HEPA filter. Regularly clean walls with water to further reduce exposure to allergens and dust.

Use washable blinds or shades, cotton-covered furniture, and limit the number of rugs, upholstered furniture, and drapes in the home. Opt for hardwood floors or tile rather than wall-to-wall carpeting.

Clean dog bedding and crates frequently. Wash clothes that you wear while interacting with dogs before putting them back in the closet or drawer.

Bathe your dog weekly and brush or comb daily. Weekly baths can greatly reduce the level of allergens on fur.

Look for symptoms of dermatitis in your dog, which often leads to accelerated skin sloughing and fur shedding. Always wash your hands after touching your dog and do not touch your eyes or other areas of your face before your hands are washed.

Wear a dust mask to reduce exposure to allergens while you groom your dog and do housework. If possible, have a professional or family member without allergies take over these tasks.

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