

Springtime Means Allergy Time

Animal welfare organization reminds dog lovers to prepare for allergy season.

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As the bitter cold of winter slowly gives way to springtime, some pet lovers may notice a tickle in their noses. And while spring is synonymous with rebirth and renewal, pet owners are advised to take care when allergy season hits full force.

“Many who suffer from allergies are unable to appreciate the joys of springtime because their allergy symptoms become a real annoyance,” said Steven Hansen, senior vice president of the ASPCA’s Poison Control Center.

“These symptoms of sneezing and itchy, watery eyes can become especially problematic for pet owners, but by taking some simple precautions, surviving allergy season with your animal companions should be much easier,” Hansen said.

The ASPCA suggests some ways in which animal lovers can make the allergy season as smooth as possible: If you are considering purchasing or adopting a new dogs, and you’re unsure as to whether your family members have allergies, have them spend time in the home of pet-owning friends before bringing home a dog. “If you suspect that you or a member of your family has allergies, take them to a specialist who will determine the exact cause of your symptoms and help alleviate your symptoms,” Hansen said. If a family member does in fact have allergies, it doesn’t necessarily mean you cannot have a pet. Medications and de-sensitizing shots can sometimes help. Consider creating an allergen-free room. A bedroom is often the most practical choice. By preventing a pet from entering this room, you can ensure freedom from allergens. Limit fabrics in your home. Allergens collect in rugs, drapes and upholstery, so if you choose to keep some fabrics as part of your décor, steam-clean them regularly. Cotton-covered furniture is a good choice and washable blinds or shades make good window treatments, according to the Poison Control Center. Dusting around the house regularly and wiping down the walls can also cut down on allergens. Vacuum frequently using a vacuum equipped with a filter or a disposable electrostatic bag, which will keep allergens locked into the vacuum. “Washable pet bedding and cages are also a smart option. They can be cleaned often and easily, making it simple to keep allergens from accumulating,” Hansen said. An air purifier fitted with a filter can also make a big difference, and anti-allergen room sprays can also deactivate allergens. Make sure your pet is clean, too. Bathing your dog once a week washes off the allergens that accumulate in an animal’s fur. You can also wipe your dog with a product formulated to prevent dander from building up and flaking off. Ask a veterinarian to suggest one that is safe to use on animals who groom themselves. Brushing or combing your pet frequently – outdoors, if possible – also helps to keep allergens at bay.