

## Relieve Cat, Dog Allergy Symptoms

**The ASPCA provides tips for allergic pet owners to minimize responses to canine or feline allergens.**

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Spring weather often can trigger allergy symptoms, making existing allergies to cats and dogs flare up. The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals offers tips to help pet owners minimize their allergic responses to cats, dogs and other allergens.

“Many who suffer from allergies are unable to appreciate the joys of springtime because their symptoms become a real annoyance,” said Steven Hansen, senior vice president of the ASPCA’s Midwest Regional Office. “Itchy, watery eyes and sneezing are problematic for seasonal allergy sufferers, and can be even worse for those who own pets. By taking a few precautions, surviving allergy season with your animal companions will be much easier.”

Hansen offered these tips for relieving allergic symptoms this spring:

Spend time with a friend’s pets before adopting your own cat or dog. Include family members in this visit. “If a family member does have allergies, it doesn’t necessarily mean you cannot have a pet,” Hansen said. “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 [the] symptoms and help alleviate them.”

Create an allergen-free room, such as a bedroom. “By preventing your pet from entering this room, you can ensure at least eight hours of freedom from allergens every night,” Hansen explained. “It’s also smart to use hypoallergenic bedding and pillow materials.”

Limit fabrics in your home, as allergens collect in rugs, drapes, and upholstery. Regularly steam-clean any fabrics that remain in your home.

Keep your home as clean as possible. Vacuum often, using a vacuum that features a HEPA filter. Air purifiers with HEPA filters also can help remove allergens from the air.

Clean your pet, too, but not too often. Grooming dogs removes allergens that accumulate in the fur, but too many baths can dry out your pet’s skin, causing the skin to flake. Regular brushing and combing also will help decrease allergens.