



# Understanding Pet Allergies

## The Basic Facts on Pet Allergens

Many people are allergic to animals and may think that the allergy is caused by the pet hair itself. Pet allergen isn't actually the hair, but is instead a protein present in the animal dander. The dander is made up of flaky skin cells and dried saliva, and it causes allergic reactions ranging from inflammation in the nose and eyes to asthma attacks.

### Q: Are there hypo-allergenic pets?

**A:** All pets produce dander, and since dander causes allergy symptoms, no pets are actually hypo-allergenic. Some may produce less dander, and allergy sufferers can be more sensitive to some breeds over others.

### Q: Where are pet allergens found?

**A:** The highest levels of pet allergens are found in people's homes who have pets, but since dander is particularly sticky, it can travel into schools, offices and other areas as it sticks to clothes and other belongings.

### Q: What can I do if I'm allergic to my pet?

**A:** Your pet should be strictly kept out of the bedroom of the allergy sufferer. Wash hands or clothes after coming into contact with the pet and bathe the pet regularly to reduce dander and keep grooming to a minimum.

### Q: How should I remove pet dander from my home?

**A:** Removing pet dander requires thorough cleaning and can take as long as 20 weeks to stop causing symptoms. Some of the most recommended steps are to encase all bedding, wash linens and blankets, treat and vacuum carpets, wipe down walls and filter air with vent filters and HEPA air cleaners.

### Q: What protection does an encasing provide?

**A:** An encasing blocks pet dander within the bed and protects you from inhaling these allergen particles.