

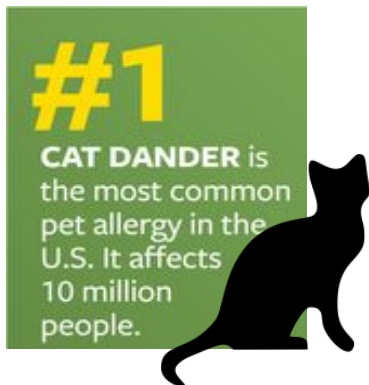
Cat Allergies

If your nose runs, your eyes water or you start sneezing and wheezing after petting or playing with a dog or cat, you likely have a pet allergy. A pet allergy can contribute to constant allergy symptoms, as exposure can occur at work, school, day care or in other indoor environments, even if a pet is not present.

Overview

Pet Allergy Symptoms

- **Sneezing**
- **Runny or stuffy nose**
- **Facial pain (from nasal congestion)**
- **Coughing, chest tightness, shortness of breath and wheezing**
- **Watery, red or itchy eyes**
- **Skin rash or hives**



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EAR, NOSE & THROAT · HEAD & NECK SURGERY ·
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IMMUNOTHERAPY

**CAT
ALLERGY**

Cat Allergies: If your nose runs and your eyes water or you start sneezing and wheezing after petting or playing with a cat, you likely have a cat allergy. A cat allergy can contribute to constant allergy symptoms, as exposure can occur at work, school, day care or in other indoor environments, even if a cat is not present.

Is there an allergy-free cat?

Cats produce multiple allergens (proteins that can cause allergy). These allergens are found on the fur and skin and in saliva. All cats produce allergens; studies have not shown that cats can be hypoallergenic. Homes with more than one cat have higher levels of cat allergens. Characteristics such as the length of a cat's hair, its sex and the amount of time a cat spends indoors are not associated with cat allergen levels.

Dust and pollen in a cat's coat can also cause allergy symptoms. In those cases, the allergy is to the dust or pollen, not to the cat.

Cat Allergy Symptoms

Cat allergy symptoms range from mild to severe, depending on an individual's sensitivity and the level of exposure to allergens. Those variables may also influence how quickly symptoms develop after exposure. Highly sensitive people can develop symptoms, including breathing problems or a rash, within minutes of touching a cat or entering a house with a cat.

Cat allergy symptoms may include:

- Sneezing or a runny or stuffy nose
- Facial pain (from nasal congestion)
- Coughing, chest tightness, shortness of breath and wheezing
- Watery, red or itchy eyes
- Skin rash or hives

Some people may also develop a rash or hives after being scratched by a cat.

Diagnosing Cat Allergies: A skin-prick test is the most common way of diagnosing a cat allergy. For this test, a small amount of an extract of cat allergen is placed on your skin. Your skin is then pricked with a small, sterile probe, allowing the liquid to seep under the skin's surface. You'll then be monitored for swelling and redness or other signs of a reaction, signaling an allergy. Results typically become evident within 15 to 20 minutes.

Even if you're sure your symptoms are caused by a cat, it's a good idea to be tested, since the symptoms may actually be caused by other environmental exposures.

Cat Allergy Management

and Treatment: Avoidance is the best way to manage a cat allergy.

If you have a cat but don't want to find it a new home, or if your family wants a cat even though someone in the household is allergic, here are some strategies that may help keep symptoms at bay:

- Keep the cat out of your bedroom and restrict it to only a few rooms. Be advised that keeping the cat in only one room will not limit the allergens to that room.
- Don't pet, hug or kiss the cat; if you do, wash your hands with soap and water.
- High-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) cleaners run continuously in a bedroom or living room can reduce allergen levels over time.
- Regular use of a high-efficiency vacuum cleaner or a central vacuum can reduce allergen levels.
- Giving your cat a bath at least once a week can reduce airborne cat allergen.

Treatments for cat allergy vary, depending on the symptoms.

Nasal symptoms often are treated with steroid nasal sprays, oral antihistamines or other oral medications. Eye symptoms are often treated with antihistamine eyedrops.

Allergy shots (immunotherapy) are an effective treatment of allergies by building tolerance over time through gradually injecting increasing doses of an allergen.

Vacuuming



Air Purifier



Shampoo



Litter



