

Wipe Away Allergies

Follow these cleaning tips to make living with cats easier on allergic family members.

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Your cat brings you countless hours of joy, but she brings your cat-allergic spouse several minutes of sneezing every morning and night. How can the two of them live together?

Cat allergies result from sensitivity to proteins in a cats saliva, urine and dander. Because dander is so lightweight, it carries easily throughout the house, meaning that the allergy-producing agents can infiltrate almost every corner of your home. Allergy medications and air filters help provide relief against allergy flare-ups, and there are many steps you can take at home to minimize allergic reactions.

1. Make vacuuming a weekly (or daily) ritual. If possible, invest in a vacuum equipped with a high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter. Regular vacuuming will help remove dander trapped in carpeting and upholstery.
2. Dust furniture, blinds, counters and other flat surfaces regularly. Wipe down walls as well.
3. Consider replacing carpeting and rugs with hardwood floors, and substituting wood blinds for curtains and draperies. The less upholstered items you have in your home, the less places allergens will be able to collect.
4. Place plastic covers on sofas or other upholstered furniture where your cat prefers to sleep. Wipe down these covers frequently.
5. Choose low-dust litters for the litterbox, and be vigilant about keeping the box clean. Enlist a non-allergic family member to clean the litterbox, as a cats urine and stool also contain allergens.