

Combining Households

Can a cat and an allergic person live under the same roof? Yes!

By Dave Good

The two of you decide to move in together, but there's a catch: One of you has cats, and the other has cat allergies. Up to now, the sneezing, watering eyes and wheezing restricted most of your visits to cat-free places. Are separate households the more realistic future? Must the cats go? Or, can this relationship, pets included, move forward under one roof?

The answer is yes. Medical options notwithstanding, there are steps you can take to reduce the symptoms most commonly suffered by people with cat allergies.

The Culprit

The allergy culprit is a protein that cats produce naturally. It is invisible to the naked eye. For the most part, the protein spreads freely about the house attached to tiny particles of skin flakes, or dander, which cats shed while grooming themselves. Medical science calls the allergen Fel d1.

"The allergen is found in cats' saliva, on their pelts and in their skin," says James Sublett, clinical professor of Allergy and Immunology in the Department of Pediatrics at the University of Louisville School of Medicine. "One problem in particular is that it's a small allergen, something like two microns in size."

****For the full article, pick up the May 2007 issue of CAT FANCY.****

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