

## Hypoallergenic Cat Tested

**Company says trials confirm specially-bred feline doesn't agitate human allergies.**

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A UCLA allergist and clinical professor has conducted an independent exposure trial that confirms that a feline bred to be hypoallergenic is in fact allergen-free, according to the San Diego company that says it's breeding and marketing the cats.

According to biotech company Allerca, the test protocol involved exposing allergic patients to three rooms of cats for the same amount of time. Each patient in the exposure trial was blindfolded to avoid psychosomatic symptoms.

The first room, the placebo room, featured a stuffed animal that felt like a cat, according to Allerca. The second room housed Allerca's hypoallergenic cat and the third room contained a regular cat.

The patients, all with clinically diagnosed cat allergy histories and positive skin tests, were unaware of the cat names, size, color or order of rooms, the company says.

"This observation exposure shows the Allerca cat has hypoallergenicity. I believe our design is very unique and a first of its kind since observing exposure to a hypoallergenic cat is so new to our field," said UCLA's Sheldon Spector, who led the study.

Allerca says that the exposure test, which took place in Los Angeles, is one of several ongoing trials that will be completed by Spector. Allerca has been conducting internal trials over the last year, but says Spector's study is said to be the first independent external study conducted to date.

"These cats have been naturally bred," said Allerca's spokesperson Bernadine Cruz, DVM, a veterinarian based in Laguna Hills, Calif. "Allerca found a naturally occurring divergence in the specific gene sequence and bred from there. Since it is natural, there are no long-term effects to worry about beyond natural evolution."

Allerca says its hypoallergenic kittens will be generally available in the first quarter of 2007 at a cost of \$3,950.