

Gesundheit!

Environmental and medical management may allow some allergic people to still have cats.

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Posted: Thu Jun 3 00:00:00 PDT 2004

"The cat allergen is a nonessential protein that helps keep the skin moist, a function it shares with other proteins," said Drew Weigner, DVM, feline specialist at The Cat Doctor in Atlanta.

Bringing Down the Allergen Reducing this allergen from the cat and your environment may reduce your chances of having an allergic reaction. Here are tips that will help control allergens.

1. Wash your cat on a weekly basis. It is important to remember that the protein is continuously produced by the cat. "While this will remove the allergen from the cat, our studies showed that within several days, the amount of allergen being shed by the cat was back to normal levels," Ownby said.
2. Wipe the cat daily with a damp cloth or disposable wipe. "This would take a significant amount of allergen off, but it probably would leave enough to still cause problems in some people," Ownby said.
3. Remove the cat allergen from the environment. Because the protein is light and easily becomes airborne, it is easily spread around the environment. Numerous studies have shown that the protein was found in most public places, including schools and in the homes of people who never owned a cat.

Some experts recommend getting HEPA (High Efficiency Particulate Air) filters, removing carpets and fluffy upholstery and non-washable curtains, and vacuuming frequently with HEPA filter bags.

"Having cat allergens building up in the carpet and furniture is like living with 20 cats instead of one," Platts-Mills said.

One rule that is trumpeted across the spectrum of allergy experts is not to allow your cat into your bedroom if you're allergic.

4. Limit your exposure to other allergens. The effect of allergens is cumulative. If you are allergic to both cats and other allergens, you may react less to the cat allergens if you reduce your exposure to the other allergens.