

MAKING IT EASIER TO GET THROUGH THE DAY

The following practical, every day tips will help you to reduce your allergy symptoms. The most important rule is: If you have an animal hair allergy, avoid all contact with animals whenever possible.

TIPS FOR EVERYDAY LIFE



If necessary, separate yourself from your pets. As painful as that may be: A spatial separation, for example from the bedroom, is not sufficient to alleviate the symptoms.



Do not acquire „substitute animals“ if you separate for allergy reasons from your pet. In most cases, an allergy develops to the new animal after some time as well.



If animal contact is unavoidable, have effective medication ready or take it as a preventive measure. Keep in mind that even in public spaces high concentrations of cat or dog allergens can be found.



Regular cleaning of your home can help reduce allergen exposure.



Ideally use synthetic materials as bedding and avoid duvets.



Use HEPA air filter systems to reduce animal hair allergen quantity in the air.

GET MORE TIPS AND INFORMATION

If you would like additional information, visit us at our Patient Information Portal. For instance, you will find a practical allergy test here along with many other useful tips.



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www.allergie-freizeit.de

The website has been awarded with the “MeinAllergiePortal Digital Health Heroes Award 2018”.

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What, when
and how in case
of allergies

ANIMAL HAIR ALLERGY

Explanation, Therapy, Tips for You



UNDERSTANDING ANIMAL HAIR ALLERGY

The word allergy essentially means „foreign reaction“. This fairly accurately describes what happens in your body in case of an allergy. An allergy is nothing more than an exaggerated defense reaction of the immune system to certain, normally harmless environmental substances. These substances are called allergens.

In case of an animal hair allergy, these allergens are found, among other things, in the fur, skin, saliva and feathers of animals. Symptoms of an animal hair allergy may appear following direct contact with certain animal species or products. However, indirect contact through inhalation of allergens trapped in textiles may also trigger typical symptoms.

THE POSSIBLE SYMPTOMS OF AN ANIMAL HAIR ALLERGY



NOSE

Allergic sniff rhinitis with sneezing, congested or runny nose, itchy nose



EYES

Allergic conjunctivitis with itchy eyes and redness



LUNGS

Allergic asthma with dry cough and shortness of breath



SKIN

Neurodermatitis with itchy red rash, hives with wheals and redness



WELL-BEING

Circulatory symptoms up to an allergic shock (e.g. after being bitten by exotic animals)

Depending on your personal sensitivity and the intensity of the allergen to which you have been exposed, anything from the mildest to the most severe forms of these symptoms may occur when you are allergic to animals.

ANIMAL SPECIES AND FORMS OF ALLERGENS

Statistically, the risk of developing an allergy is highest when it comes to house pets such as cats or dogs. However, it is also possible for allergies to develop to other animals such as horse, cow, rabbit, hamster or guinea pig. Allergies to exotic animals such as chinchillas, desert mice, ferrets, amphibians and reptiles are also known. Basically, it is possible to develop an allergy to any animal.

Particularly in the case of cat or dog hair allergies, it is difficult to avoid contact with the allergens. Because they cling to clothing and hang for a long time in the air, they are nearly everywhere in public spaces such as schools and public transport. The risk of developing an allergy to certain breeds of dogs, such as boxers and schnauzers, is higher than for other breeds. For cats, the breed is not important, though the sex is: Male cats are more often the cause of symptoms than females.

BEING AWARE OF CROSS-REACTIVITY

So-called cross-reactivity of allergens can mean that you may react to animals other than those typical for your allergy. The following table shows examples of how animal hair allergies may be connected.

	DOG	CAT	HORSE
DOG	-	x	x
CAT	x	-	x
HORSE	x	x	-

If you are allergic to cat or dog hair, it is very likely that you are also allergic to hair from other animal species (e.g. guinea pigs, rabbits, hamsters and cows).



Sensitization to animal allergens is considered a strong risk factor for the development of allergic asthma.

KNOW YOUR TREATMENT OPTIONS

The most important thing is to avoid the allergens whenever possible. For example, if possible avoid owning a pet. Due to the general presence of allergens, it is scarcely possible to avoid them all together. Therefore your doctor will likely recommend medications to you to mitigate the symptoms. For acute situations, so-called anti-allergic pharmacotherapy is used. However, with this treatment method, the allergy symptoms can only be alleviated for the duration of its use. This will not address the cause of your allergy.

ALLERGEN IMMUNOTHERAPY

The cause of animal hair allergies can only be treated with immunotherapy. Through regularly administering the allergy causing substances, your immune system can be positively influenced, which allows your body to build its own tolerance to the allergens.

IMPORTANT FACTS

- 1 Allergen immunotherapy is the only treatment that targets the root cause of your animal hair allergy.
- 2 It can lead to a permanent reduction in your symptoms and improve your long-term quality of life.
- 3 It should be undertaken as early as possible in the course of the disease.
- 4 It can be administered as injections, drops or tablets. For successful therapy, treatment must be administered without interruption for at least three years.