

Boroughbred Behavior Resources



Issue: Managing Cat Allergies

Contrary to what most people believe, cat allergies are not a result of their fur but rather a protein allergen that is found in the urine and saliva. This protein sticks to dead skin “dander” and their fur when they use the litter box or when they groom themselves.

These allergens are easily transported by air and might be found anywhere. However, it is easy to control the amount that spreads throughout the house so having cat allergies doesn't necessarily mean you can never have a cat as a pet!

Steps to manage allergies:

- The person with allergies should make their bedroom a human-only zone. You should clean the entire room and replace all bedding and curtains – if replacement is not an option, thoroughly clean them in hot water. This will help reduce the amount of allergens accumulated in the room, and keeping kitty out of the room will prevent more allergens from building up again.
- Brush your cat outdoors. This will prevent loose hair from getting in your home and also reduces the amount of fur that sticks to the couch, carpets, and other surfaces.
- Place HEPA filters around the house. A HEPA filter is a type of mechanical air filter; it works by forcing air through a fine mesh that traps harmful particles such as pollen, pet dander, dust mites, and tobacco smoke.
- Bathing can help reduce the amount of allergen on the cat, so if your cat is amenable to baths you may want to try this (after discussing with your veterinarian). However, many cats don't enjoy baths, so in these instances you can use pet wipes to reduce the amount of saliva and dander that your cat has on their fur.
- Make sure the litter box is as clean as possible. Try replacing the litter at least twice a week as this will help reduce the amount of urine that accumulates in the litter box.

Use over-the-counter medication (for the person with allergies). These medication will help relieve allergy symptoms. We recommend contacting your doctor to discuss your options and to choose the best medication that is right for you.

Consult your doctor and get tested for allergies. Before giving up your cat you want to make sure that this is what you are actually allergic to! There are other allergens that may be causing your symptoms.

For more information:

International Association of Animal Behavior Consultants: <https://m.iaabc.org/>

Certified Applied Animal Behaviorists: <http://corecaab.org/>