

## **ANIMAL DANDER CONTROL MEASURES**

Animal derived allergens, such as dander, urine, and saliva, are often one of the primary offender for inhalant allergy. The most common animal allergies are to cats and dogs, by many warm-blooded pets including small rodents, birds, rabbits, cows, and horses may cause problems. Most animal allergens are circulated through a house as small microscopic particles, invisible to the human eye.

Cat allergen can be very problematic. Even in homes where a cat has never lived, cat allergen has been detected, as the allergen is very sticky and can be picked up on clothing and brought into the home.

Places your pet typically rests – like carpets, couches, and beds – generally have a significant allergen build-up. Clothing may also have a considerable allergen build-up. When one of these areas is disturbed, the allergens become airborne and stay suspended in the air for a long period of time. Many times do not recognize that their allergy symptoms could be related to animals in their environment. Since there is no obvious onset or decline of symptoms (like that which occurs with seasonal allergies), the source of symptoms is easily overlooked.

Keep the following tips in mind to help control your symptoms:

- Avoidance is always the best control measure! Keeping the animal out of the home is ideal.
- At the very least, keep the animal out of the bedroom to minimize the concentration of allergen located there.
- Thoroughly clean the areas where the animal rests. Wear a dust mask while doing this.
- Washing and grooming the animal regularly outside of the house can also help reduce the allergen load in the home.
- Short haired animals may bring less pollen into the home.
- Wash the animal's bedding weekly in hot water.
- Follow the general principles for dust control.
- Use multi-pleated extended surface filters in your heating system to eliminate airborne dander. If the animal is kept out of the room at all times, HEPA filters placed in the bedroom may reduce nighttime exposure.
- When visiting a home with pets, remember to take your medication (antihistamine such as Claritin, Zyrtec, or Allegra) prior to your visit. After your departure, try to change clothing as soon as possible.