



ASTHMA EDUCATION NEWSLETTER

Indoor Asthma Triggers: Will My Pet Affect My Asthma?

Asthma is a chronic lung disease that causes the airways to be sensitive to certain environmental triggers. Exposure to warm blooded pets and animals can be a common asthma trigger for many people.2 In this newsletter we are going to learn a little bit more about why animals trigger asthma and what we can do about it.

Asthma symptoms can be caused by exposure to pets and animals.2 Your pet’s dander, saliva, or even urine are possible causes of an asthma episode.1 When exposed to animals, you may notice chest tightness, wheezing, or coughing which are all symptoms of an asthma episode.2 Reactions to animals can be very mild or very severe.3 It is also possible you are sensitive to animals and don’t even know it! If you have frequent respiratory illnesses or asthma symptoms, check with your doctor to see if you might be sensitive to your pet or other environmental triggers.3

Unfortunately, the best treatment for sensitivity to pets is to remove the pet from your home.2 If this isn’t feasible, or if you feel that you can’t make that change, then it is important to take a few extra steps when having a pet in your home.

*Keep the pet out of your bedroom at all times. Your pet must not sleep with you!1

*Bathe your pet weekly and keep it well groomed. Bathing temporarily removes some of the dander and saliva from the pet’s fur, and it also prevents you from being exposed to pollen or other outdoor allergens that might be on the pet’s fur.4

*Hypoallergenic pets are not necessarily safe for people with asthma. Hypoallergenic means “low allergy” not “no allergy”! If you are allergic to dogs, a hypoallergenic dog will still potentially cause asthma symptoms.4

*Vacuum your carpets and upholstery, and mop your floors frequently to remove as much dander and fur from the carpet as possible.1

*Isolating your pet in one area of the house is not a good way to control pet dander.1 Your home is filled with air ducts than can suck up the dander and blow it into another room.

The best way to avoid pets as an asthma trigger is to completely remove the pet from the home.2 If you decide to find your pet a new home, be sure to clean the house from top to bottom after the pet is gone.1 Pet dander can linger in a home for months after the pet leaves the home.1 This is also something to think about if you are purchasing a new home that may have had pets in it from the previous owner.

Living with asthma sometimes means making hard decisions to benefit your own health and well being. In the coming asthma newsletters, we will talk more about how to best avoid triggers and control your home environment. Breathe easy and enjoy the rest of the summer!

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UPCOMING ASTHMA EVENTS AT ST. ALEXIUS MEDICAL CENTER

October 21, 2010
7:00 PM

Asthma: Fact, Myth, and Management

4th Floor Conference Center

Call to RSVP:
847-843-2000
ext. 5391

UPCOMING NEWSLETTER TOPICS

*Triggers

*Environmental Controls

*Special Topics in Asthma Management

*And Much more!

