

## Top 10 Ways to Decrease Your Allergies to Cats!

Naturally, if we were sane and rational about our allergies, we would stay away from anything that makes us sick. Many of us, however, are not sane and rational about pets, especially our cats. Although cat allergy symptoms may never go away completely, they are manageable.

Remember this basic fact about cat allergens. They need to be airborne and you need to breathe them in for you to have an allergic reaction to them. Cat allergen is very small so it remains suspended in the air longer. There is also a high rate of recontamination (because the cats are running around the house). Here are some recommended steps to decrease your (or your partner's) cat allergies.

### **1. No more cats sleeping on the bed.**

Sorry, this is a small price to pay for allergy relief. If you get your symptoms under control by all means invite them back, but give yourself a break while you are trying to abate your symptoms.

### **2. Keep them out of the bedroom altogether.**

Close the bedroom door to try and keep the cat allergen down in the bedroom. Your bedroom should be a sanctuary from allergens. So tempt your cats to sleep elsewhere during the day.

### **3. Wash all bedding in 140-degree hot water at least twice monthly.**

This eliminates both dust mite and cat allergen (because we know some of you will still let them sneak up on the bed every now and then).

### **4. Use HEPA air filters in rooms where your cats frequent.**

Since cat allergen is so difficult to remove, a good HEPA (high efficiency particulate air) air purifier is essential for cleaning the air in your home. HEPA air purifiers do require continued filter replacement, but when push comes to shove and you are in need of allergy relief, a good HEPA filter will do it for you.

### **5. Vacuum up cat allergen with a high grade HEPA vacuum cleaner twice weekly.**

Vacuum walls, carpet, flooring, chairs, and furniture...everywhere. Use the hand tools on the vacuum. Cat allergen particles are very small and invasive so you really have to do a thorough job. Good hand tools on your vacuum cleaner are the answer here. Also, installing a central vacuum will help pick up the rest.

### **6. Use a vapor steam cleaner to clean your home.**

In addition to vacuuming, vapor steam cleaners are now proven by research to be extremely helpful in killing off the cat proteins/dander, which are embedded in your carpets and upholstery. Steam cleaners provide a chemical-free way of cleaning and killing dust mites, bacteria, mold spores and cat allergen.

### **7. Wash your hands immediately after petting your cat and do not rub your eyes.**

Rubbing your eyes can result in itchy eyes for hours. Use a strong anti-bacterial soap to avoid this problem.

### **8. Clean your cat.**

Some people wash their cats to reduce the amount of cat allergen that is released from their cat into the air, but research seems to be conflicting about its effectiveness. Allerpet, a well-known brand of liquid that reduces cat allergen in the air, can be applied to your cat's coat and is available from your local veterinarian. Alternatively, you can get a micro fiber cloth and just damp rub down the cat's coats to rid it of visible dander. The majority of cats would prefer this to the highly dreaded bath.

### **9. Confine your cats to one area of the house.**

I know this will be difficult for some people but this at least controls the cat allergens to a separate place where you can concentrate your air purifier and cleaning efforts.

### **10. You DO NOT have to get rid of your CAT!**

If you do a good job with step numbers 1-9, your cat allergies should be significantly decreased. Keeping a cat when you have allergies takes a concerted effort, and is only for those who are nutty enough about their cats (like us), to go to all this trouble.