

## Living with Allergies and Pets

If reaction(s) are difficult to deal with but not life threatening, try these steps before considering surrendering:

Often ones allergies are triggered by the total cumulative allergen load, or a combination of all allergens in the air so by reducing the total allergen load pet dander may no longer pose a threat!

- **Purchase an air purifier (or multiple)** – HEPA air filters can make a huge difference in air quality by reducing the allergen load in the home
- **Let some fresh air in** –energy efficient homes/windows can lock air in that contains allergens. If possible let fresh air in by opening a window and use an air purifier
- **Create an allergy free zone**
  - Consider pillow and mattress/box spring covers and easily washable bedding materials
  - Use an air purifier in this room
  - Limit rugs, drapes or curtains to materials that are easily washed, wash twice a month
  - This room is off limits for your pet
- **Bathe/groom your pet on a weekly basis**
  - Look for shampoos/wipes that are formulated to prevent dander, wipes are helpful for difficult to bathe pets
  - Consult with your vet which type of shampoo is acceptable to use frequently on your pet without drying his/her coat out
  - Monitor your pets coat for any signs of dermatitis, which often leads to accelerated shedding which can increase allergens in the air
  - Consult with your vet on your pets diet and any supplements that may help keep your pets coat conditioned and healthy
  - Brush your pet outside when possible, or if you have a cat, brush outdoors only if you have a safe enclosed area or if your cat is on a leash/harness- otherwise you can groom him/her in the bathroom, as it is a room often containing more hard/more easily cleanable surfaces than other rooms
- **Adjust your cleaning routine**
  - Vacuum frequently, preferably with a vacuum equipped with a HEPA filter or disposable bag so allergens will not escape the bag during disposal
  - Dust and wipe down walls more frequently –the use of an electrostatic duster or damp rag can help reduce allergens
  - If you have a cat, consider cleaning the litter box more frequently and using low dust and perfume free litter
  - Consider wearing a dust mask while cleaning or having another family member help out
  - Invest in easily washable pet bedding instead of bulky beds if able
- **See a doctor or allergist**
  - A medical professional will be able to pinpoint what is triggering your allergies, IE: it may not actually be your pet but rather tree pollen that got on your dog's fur during a walk
  - Your doctor may suggest antihistamine sprays/pills, immunotherapy shots or other alternatives which will help manage and reduce reactions