

PETS

6 Myths About Pet Allergies

NewsUSA

(NU) - By gaining a better understanding of the allergies caused by pets, you may be able to find a healthier coexistence with your furry friend.

According to The Humane Society, 62 percent of American households have at least one pet. Yet, an estimated 31 million Americans are allergic to animals, including up to 30 percent of those who have asthma. Here's what you should know about pet allergies:

Myth 1: It's only pet hair that causes allergies to flare up.

Not true. Pet hair is a nuisance and causes allergies, as it contains saliva or other pet proteins. Allergic reactions to pets are actually caused by pet proteins contained in pet dander, such as microscopic skin flakes, saliva and urine. Overactive immune systems in those with allergies attack these otherwise harmless substances.

Myth 2: Continuous exposure to animals will eventually desensitize you to them.

Not only is this not true, but in some cases the opposite is true. If you have a confirmed allergy to animals, it usually will not get better through increasing exposure. In fact, it may get worse.

Myth 3: With the right pet breed, allergy problems go away.

Not true. All cat or dog breeds produce dander. However, some breeds are believed to be better for allergy sufferers than other breeds. Typically the best breeds are those that shed the least fur and/or are the most frequently bathed. Also, smaller dogs produce less saliva than do bigger dogs.

Myth 4: Small animals are not a problem for allergies.

Wrong. Hamsters, guinea



Take time to understand the misconceptions that surround allergies caused by pets.

pigs, birds and other warm-blooded mammals can also trigger asthma and allergies in people with allergies to animal dander, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Myth 5: Outside the home, you shouldn't have pet allergies.

Not necessarily. Because of their microscopic size and jagged shape, pet allergens easily stick to clothing and other fabrics and are carried to other locations. Animal dander – in sufficient levels to cause allergies – can be found in many public places such as the workplace, classrooms and hospitals, according to the American Lung Association.

Myth 6: An air purifier will help with pet allergies.

It depends on the air purifier. Only a high-performance air purifier can help. Some allergy sufferers report that small, low-quality air cleaners make little or no difference at all. However, many allergy sufferers report that their IQAir air purifier, in combination with improved cleaning methods, has reduced or completely eliminated their allergic reactions to pets in their homes.

For more information, visit the IQAir website at www.iqair.com.