



# Information About Dog Allergies

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Americans love pets! In fact, 74% of pet owners in the U.S. own a dog.<sup>1</sup> And studies have shown that dog and other pet allergens are everywhere, including in homes that have never had pets.<sup>2</sup> Because it's nearly impossible to avoid dog allergens, it's important to identify and treat your severe dog allergies.

## What Causes DOG ALLERGIES?

People with dog allergies have an immune system response when they're exposed to certain proteins in dog saliva, dander (dead skin cells), or urine. Interestingly, dog hair is not considered an allergen. However, dog hair collects and spreads dog allergens and other environmental allergens, like dust, mold and pollen. So it still contributes to your allergies.

## Dog Allergy SYMPTOMS

If you have any of the following symptoms after petting or playing with a dog, you may have dog allergies. Symptoms can range from minor to severe.

- Sneezing
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Facial pain from nasal congestion
- Coughing, tightness in chest, shortness of breath, or wheezing
- Watery, red or itchy eyes
- Skin rash or hives

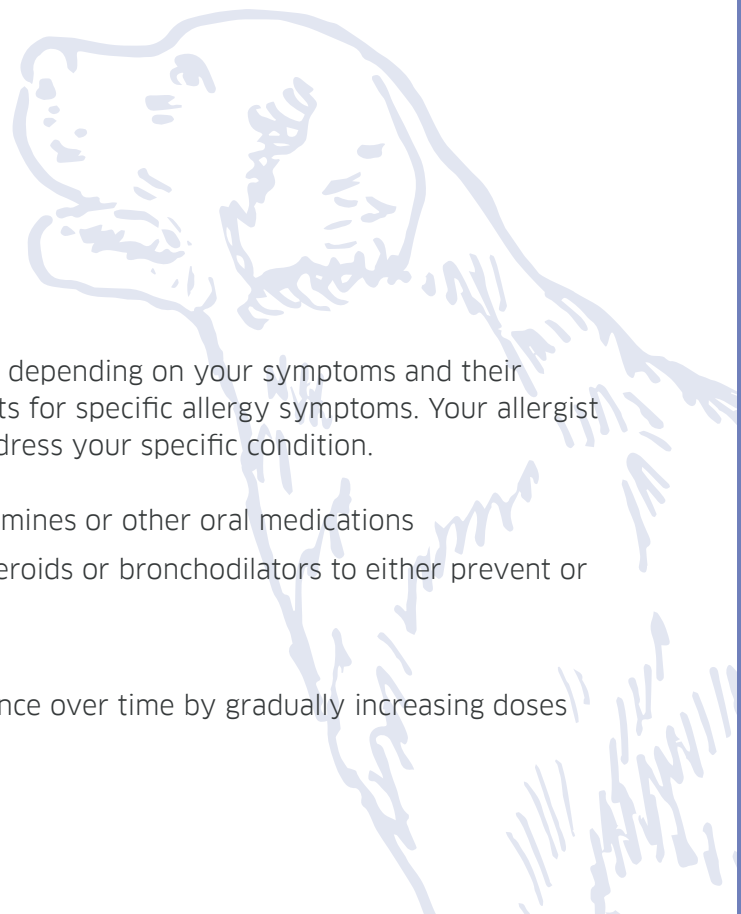
## Dog Allergy DIAGNOSIS

If you suspect you have dog allergies, your allergist is here to help! They will ask you questions about medical history, symptoms, triggers, and may suggest allergy testing to confirm your allergy.

## Dog Allergy TREATMENT

Treatment options for dog allergies will vary depending on your symptoms and their severity. Below are some common treatments for specific allergy symptoms. Your allergist can recommend a treatment plan to best address your specific condition.

- Nasal – Steroid nasal sprays, oral antihistamines or other oral medications
- Respiratory or Asthma – Inhaled corticosteroids or bronchodilators to either prevent or relieve respiratory symptoms
- Eye – Antihistamine eye drops
- Allergy Shots – Injections that build tolerance over time by gradually increasing doses of the allergen



A skin prick test is the most common type of allergy testing. This test involves pricking your skin with a sterile device and then applying a small amount of allergen extract to your skin. Then you're monitored for swelling, redness, or other signs of a reaction. This reaction helps your allergist determine the severity of your dog allergy and can help them identify potential treatments to help relieve your symptoms. In some cases, a doctor may use a blood test instead of a skin prick test.

## Tips for Reducing Exposure to DOG ALLERGENS

**Avoidance is the best way to manage your dog allergy. However, if that's not possible there are some strategies that may help minimize your symptoms.**

- Restrict your dog to a few rooms in your home and keep the dog out of your bedroom. This won't prevent allergens from reaching into other rooms, but it may reduce their levels.
- Avoid petting, hugging, or kissing the dog. If you do, make sure to wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water afterwards.
- Run a high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) cleaner continuously in your bedroom or living room to help reduce allergen levels over time.
- Use a high-efficiency vacuum cleaner or central vacuum to help reduce allergen levels. And make sure to vacuum at least once per week.
- Bath your dog at least once a week to reduce airborne dog allergens. If your allergies are severe, leave dog washing to a non-allergenic household member or professional dog groomer.

## Hypoallergenic Dogs – Fact or Fiction?

You may have heard some types of dogs are referred to as hypoallergenic, meaning they are relatively unlikely to cause an allergic reaction. These breeds have been thought to have lower levels of pet dander (specifically Can f 1 proteins) compared to other breeds.

However, no scientific studies or publications have confirmed this claim. In fact, a paper published in July 2011 compared dog allergen levels in homes with hypoallergenic dogs vs. non-hypoallergenic dogs. They found that “there was no evidence for differential shedding of allergen by dogs grouped as hypoallergenic.”<sup>3</sup>

### References

1. Facts + Statistics: Pet Ownership and Insurance. (n.d.) Insurance Information Institute. Retrieved July 12, 2021 from <https://www.iii.org/fact-statistic/facts-statistics-pet-ownership-and-insurance>.
2. S.J. Arbes, R.D. Cohn, M. Yin, M.L. Mullenbert, W. Friedman, and D.C. Zeldin. Dog Allergen (Can f1) and Cat Allergen (Fel d1) in US Homes: Results from the National Survey of Lead Allergens in Housing. *The Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology*, 114(1), 111-117 (2004).
3. Nicholas CE, Wegienka GR, Havstad SL, Zoratti EM, Ownby DR, Johnson CC. Dog allergen levels in homes with hypoallergenic compared with nonhypoallergenic dogs. *Am J Rhinol Allergy*. 2011 Jul-Aug;25(4):252-6. doi: 10.2500/ajra.2011.25.3606. PMID: 21819763; PMCID: PMC3680143.

