

Air Ok Technologies

Now it's possible to see what you breathe

WHAT IS PET DANDER

Pet dander is composed of tiny, even microscopic, flecks of skin shed by cats, dogs, rodents, birds and other animals with fur or feathers. These bits of skin can cause reactions in people who are specifically allergic to these triggers. Additional allergy triggers or allergens come from sources other than the animal's skin. Proteins found in saliva, urine and feces from cats, dogs and other pets can cause allergic reactions in some people. Dried saliva containing allergens may flake off from an animal's fur and become airborne, where it is inhaled by the allergic person. Dust from dried feces can be suspended in the same way.

HOW DO PET ALLERGENS SPREAD

Pet allergens are very light weight and small. They remain suspended in the air for a long time, much longer than allergens from cockroaches or dust mites. Because of their microscopic size and jagged shape, pet allergens easily stick to furniture, bedding, fabrics and many items carried into and out of the home. Animal dander is easily spread through the home and out to public places like schools and hospitals.

WHICH PETS POSE MORE PROBLEMS

Animals with fur may be more likely to carry allergens from other sources, like dust, but the fur itself is generally not a trigger. For that reason, short-haired or hairless animals contribute dander and allergens to indoor air pollution just as effectively as long-haired animals do. However, roughly twice as many people report allergies to cats when compared to dogs.



HEALTH EFFECTS

An allergen is a normally harmless substance that triggers the immune system to overreact in people with allergies. This response can cause allergy symptoms such as sniffing, sneezing and itchiness and watery eyes.

Some people are allergic to pets or have asthma that is triggered by pet allergens. For these individuals, breathing animal allergens can make respiratory symptoms worse and lead to a decline in the ability of the lungs to function. The concentrations of an allergen required to cause a reaction vary greatly by individual.

People with allergies may experience upper and lower respiratory tract symptoms including congestion, sneezing, runny nose, chest tightness and wheezing. Other symptoms are itching, watery eyes, and eczema or rashes.