The following practical, every day tips will help you to reduce your allergy symptoms. The most important rule is: If you have an animal hair allergy, avoid all contact with animals whenever possible.

**TIPS FOR EVERYDAY LIFE**

- If necessary, separate yourself from your pets. As painful as that may be: A spatial separation, for example from the bedroom, is not sufficient to alleviate the symptoms.
- Do not acquire "substitute animals" if you separate for allergy reasons from your pet. In most cases, an allergy develops to the new animal after some time as well.
- If animal contact is unavoidable, have effective medication ready or take it as a preventive measure. Keep in mind that even in public spaces high concentrations of cat or dog allergens can be found.
- Regular cleaning of your home can help reduce allergen exposure.
- Ideally use synthetic materials as bedding and avoid duvets.
- Use HEPA air filter systems to reduce animal hair allergen quantity in the air.

**GET MORE TIPS AND INFORMATION**

If you would like additional information, visit us at our Patient Information Portal. For instance, you will find a practical allergy test here along with many other useful tips.

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www.allergie-freizeit.de

The website has been awarded with the "MeinAllergiePortal Digital Health Heroes Award 2018".
The word allergy essentially means "foreign reaction". This fairly accurately describes what happens in your body in case of an allergy. An allergy is nothing more than an exaggerated defense reaction of the immune system to certain, normally harmless environmental substances. These substances are called allergens.

In case of an animal hair allergy, these allergens are found, among other things, in the fur, skin, saliva and feathers of animals. Symptoms of an animal hair allergy may appear following direct contact with certain animal species or products. However, indirect contact through inhalation of allergens trapped in textiles may also trigger typical symptoms.

Statistically, the risk of developing an allergy is highest when it comes to house pets such as cats or dogs. However, it is also possible for allergies to develop to other animals such as horse, cow, rabbit, hamster or guinea pig. Allergies to exotic animals such as chinchillas, desert mice, ferrets, amphibians and reptiles are also known. Basically, it is possible to develop an allergy to any animal.

Particularly in the case of cat or dog hair allergies, it is difficult to avoid contact with the allergens. Because they cling to clothing and hang for a long time in the air, they are nearly everywhere in public spaces such as schools and public transport. The risk of developing an allergy to certain breeds of dogs, such as boxers and schnauzers, is higher than for other breeds. For cats, the breed is not important, though the sex is: Male cats are more often the cause of symptoms than females.

Sensitization to animal allergens is considered a strong risk factor for the development of allergic asthma.

**ANIMAL SPECIES AND FORMS OF ALLERGENS**

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If you are allergic to cat or dog hair, it is very likely that you are also allergic to hair from other animal species (e.g. guinea pigs, rabbits, hamsters and cows).

**BEING AWARE OF CROSS-REACTIVITY**

So-called cross-reactivity of allergens can mean that you may react to animals other than those typical for your allergy. The following table shows examples of how animal hair allergies may be connected.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Allergen</th>
<th>Dog</th>
<th>Cat</th>
<th>Horse</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dog</td>
<td>-</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cat</td>
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**ALLERGEN IMMUNOTHERAPY**

The cause of animal hair allergies can only treated with immunotherapy. Through regularly administering the allergy causing substances, your immune system can be positively influenced, which allows your body to build its own tolerance to the allergens.

**IMPORTANT FACTS**

1. Allergen Immunotherapy is the only treatment that targets the root cause of your animal hair allergy.
2. It can lead to a permanent reduction in your symptoms and improve your long-term quality of life.
3. It should be undertaken as early as possible in the course of the disease.
4. It can be administered as injections, drops or tablets. For successful therapy, treatment must be administered without interruption for at least three years.