

# Allergic to Cats? Try This Simple Feeding Trick

By Dr. Karen Becker 2-23-15

If you're a cat lover who is allergic to cats, or someone else in your family is, the good news is that many people are able to build up a tolerance to kitty allergens over time. In fact, the majority of allergic cat enthusiasts learn how to manage their condition without having to live a feline-free existence. It seems the benefits of being owned by a kitty outweigh the drawbacks of allergies for most cat people.

## The Cause of Your Sneezing and Wheezing

Many people don't realize that it's not a cat's fur coat that triggers allergic symptoms, but rather, tiny flakes of skin called dander. That's why hairless cat breeds aren't truly hypoallergenic.

You can also be sensitive to your cat's saliva, which you can be exposed to when you pet her, or when saliva comes in direct contact with your skin. Many people are allergic to a specific protein called FEL-d1 found in both cat dander and saliva. And some people are even allergic to cat urine.

Interestingly, several studies in recent years suggest that babies who live with pets in their first year or two have less chance of developing allergies as they grow.

## How to Minimize Cat Allergies at Home

- Consider making your bedroom (or the bedroom of your allergic family member) a cat-free zone. This means Fluffy can't enter the room for any reason.
- Purchase a good quality air purifier to help clean the air of allergens and other pollutants.
- To prevent a buildup of allergens inside your home, replace carpeting with hard flooring, replace drapes and curtains with non-fabric window coverings, and if possible, avoid upholstered furniture.
- Clean your home often and thoroughly, including any surfaces that trap pet hair and dander (couch covers, pillows, bedding, pet beds, etc.)
- Wash bedding at least weekly in hot water.
- Wash your hands after handling your cat, and if the two of you have been snuggling on the couch, consider a shower and shampoo before retiring to avoid bringing kitty allergens to bed with you.
- Feed your cat an anti-inflammatory (grain free), balanced, species-appropriate diet. Reducing or eliminating the allergenic and genetically modified foods your kitty eats reduces the allergenic quality of her saliva.
- Make sure your cat is getting optimal levels of essential fatty acids in her diet to reduce shedding and dander.
- Bathe your cat regularly, taking care to use only a safe, non-drying herbal animal shampoo.

## Story at-a-glance

- » The majority of people who love cats but are allergic to them either find they build up a tolerance to kitty allergens over time, or they learn tricks to manage their condition so they can share their heart and home with one or more feline companions
- » The trigger for most cat allergies is not kitty's fur coat but her skin dander, or for many people, a specific protein found in both cat dander and saliva
- » There are several methods for reducing cat allergens in your home, including air purifiers, hard flooring, regular and thorough housecleaning, feeding kitty an anti-inflammatory diet that includes omega-3 essential fatty acids, and bathing your cat
- » Also consider a protocol of allergy-fighting supplements, including quercetin, bromelain, and papain; omega-3 fatty acids; coconut oil; and a probiotic supplement or traditionally fermented foods

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## **Other Recommendations**

Your allergic sensitivity to cats is the result of an inflammatory response in your body. There are several supplements you might want to consider taking to help reduce inflammation, including:

- Quercetin. Quercetin is a bioflavonoid with anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties. I call it “nature’s Benadryl” because it suppresses the release of histamine, which is what causes much of the inflammation, redness and irritation characteristic of an allergic response.
- Bromelain and papain. Bromelain and papain are proteolytic enzymes that increase the absorption of quercetin, and also suppress histamine production. I recommend using quercetin, bromelain, and papain together because they suppress the release of prostaglandins, which are also a factor in the inflammatory process.
- Omega-3 fatty acids. Omega-3s help decrease inflammation throughout the body. One of the best sources of omega-3 fatty acids is krill oil.
- Coconut oil. Coconut oil contains lauric acid, which helps decrease production of yeast. Using a fish body oil like krill oil with coconut oil can help moderate or suppress the inflammatory response.
- Probiotics and/or traditionally fermented foods. Healthy gut bacteria are crucial for proper immune system function. Allergies are a symptom of an overactive immune system.
- Consider NAET, a natural allergy elimination technique that may reduce your sensitivities quickly and effectively.

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