Cat Allergen Management

MANAGING CAT ALLERGENS

Allergies to cats affect as many as 1 in 5 adults worldwide, and human allergists typically recommend avoiding cats to reduce allergen exposure.[1] However, most cat owners consider their pets as part of the family, and often resist removing the cat from the home.

A novel nutritional approach can help neutralize the major cat allergen (Fel d 1) in cats' saliva, before Fel d 1 spreads to the environment. As part of a comprehensive cat allergen management program, this new approach provides an opportunity to reframe conversations with pet owners: it can help reduce exposure to the allergen – not to the cat.

Key Messages

- 95% of people who have sensitivities to cat allergens are responding to Fel d 1, the major cat allergen.[2]
  - Fel d 1 is produced primarily in the salivary and sebaceous glands, spread throughout the cat's hair during grooming, and then shed into the environment with hair and dander (dead skin cells).
- Cat allergens have consequences for both the allergen-sensitive owner and the cat.
  - Limiting interactions between owners and their cats in efforts to avoid or reduce allergen exposure can cause anxiety and stress for the cat.[3,4]
  - Allergies are one of the top reasons for relinquishment of cats to shelters.[5-8]

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DID YOU KNOW?

Contrary to popular belief, it is not the cat's hair that causes a reaction in sensitized individuals. Allergens produced primarily in cats' salivary and sebaceous glands are responsible for triggering a reaction. This means that even hairless cats, like the Cornish Rex and Sphinx, produce this allergen.[2]

Key Messages (continued)

- A nutritional approach can safely help reduce active Fel d 1 on the cat, before the allergen gets into the environment.[9-11]
  - Published studies show that when cats eat kibble coated with an egg product containing antibodies to Fel d 1, this ingredient can bind to the allergen in the cat's saliva and neutralize the allergen. This neutralized Fel d 1 is distributed through grooming and shed into the environment, but is not recognized as an allergen by a sensitized individual's immune system.
    - 47% reduction, on average, of active Fel d 1 on cat's hair beginning with the third week of feeding the diet.
    - 97% of cats showed decreased levels of active Fel d 1 on the hair and dander.
  - This approach maintains normal allergen production by the cat, without affecting the cat's overall physiology.

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