A FELINE-FRIENDLY BREAKTHROUGH IN CAT ALLERGEN REDUCTION

BRINGING CATS AND THEIR ALLERGIC OWNERS CLOSER:
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A common problem with consequences for people and cats

Allergies can impair the quality of life for allergy sufferers by interfering with daily activities and performance. They also limit the interactions between the allergic person and their cat, and allergy to cats is a commonly provided reason for relinquishment to shelters as well as a barrier to cat adoption and ownership.

Fel d1, the major cat allergen

Fel d1 is the major cat allergen. All cats produce Fel d1 regardless of breed or physical characteristics; there are no truly allergen-free or hypoallergenic cats. It is produced primarily in the salivary and sebaceous glands, spread throughout the cat’s hair coat during grooming and shed into the environment with hair and dander. Fel d1’s function for the cat is as yet unknown, but a pheromone/chemical signaling role has been proposed.

Reducing allergen exposure is key to allergy management

Avoiding exposure to the allergen is the foundation for allergists’ recommendations to remove the cat from the home. Stringent environmental controls (such as excluding the cat from the bedroom; removing carpeting; and regular, thorough cleaning) can successfully reduce Fel d1 levels, possibly allowing the cat to remain in the home, but these measures are effort-intensive and may be difficult to maintain long-term.

Allergies to cats are the most common animal-origin allergies in humans, and affect approximately 1 in 5 adults worldwide.
A transformational approach to managing allergies to cats

For the first time in history, Purina scientists have demonstrated a proactive way to significantly reduce the active levels of Fel d1 by taking advantage of the antibody-allergen interaction to neutralize Fel d1 in the cat’s saliva, before it is spread into the environment. Anti-Fel d1 IgY antibodies bind and neutralize Fel d1, preventing it from binding to IgE in a Fel d1-sensitized individual.

Purina’s research showed that when cats were fed a diet with an egg product ingredient containing anti-Fel d1 IgY, 97% showed decreased levels of active Fel d1 on their hair and dander. (“Active” Fel d1 is Fel d1 that is capable of binding to IgE and triggering an allergic response in sensitized individuals.) On average, there was a 47% reduction of active Fel d1 on cats’ hair after 3 weeks of being fed the diet. Additionally, 86% of cats had at least 30% of baseline levels. This ultimately reduces active Fel d1 levels in the environment. Cat-allergic people exposed to dander from cats fed a diet with anti-Fel d1 IgY showed significant reductions in nasal allergy symptoms and some ocular symptoms.

The ingredient is safe for cats, based on a comprehensive safety study that fed an egg product ingredient with multiple levels of anti-Fel d1 IgY, including levels many times higher than those used in our studies.

Change the conversation. Keep the cat.

Cat owners with allergies to cats face a difficult conversation with an allergist or veterinarian who might recommend rehoming the cat. Because of Purina’s transformational approach to managing these allergies, now they can have a different conversation — one that helps keep cats in loving homes.

For more information on this breakthrough, visit www.purinainstitute.com.

References