



PET ALLERGENS



IS IT SAFE TO HAVE PETS AROUND YOUNG CHILDREN?

The companionship that pets offer has proven benefits to human health, both physically and mentally. However, pets can pose some hazards to young children: injury from bites or scratches, the exacerbation of asthma from pet dander and saliva, and the irritation of fleas. Children can also contract diseases from infected. The potential causative agents are bacteria, viruses, parasites and fungi (from pets). Whereas the likelihood of contracting diseases from pets is rather small, allergies and asthma are serious concerns for young children.



HOW SHOULD I CHOOSE A PET FOR MY CHILD CARE SETTING?

Check your state's laws and childcare licensing standards with regards to animals on the premises. Make sure to check with your municipality or county for any existing or pending breed-specific bans. Consider the age and health status of people who will come into regular contact with the pet- children under the age of five, those with severe pet allergies, those with asthma, and people who have impaired or weakened immune systems can be more vulnerable. Ensure that the pets are well-trained and tolerant. Obtain a pet from a reputable source, and ensure it receives a bill of good health from a licensed veterinarian.

HOW CAN I REDUCE PET ALLERGENS IN MY HOME OR CHILD CARE SETTING?

- If a child is known to be allergic to the pet, at a minimum, keep the pet out of the home.
- Keep pets off of furniture.
- Bathe and groom pets like dogs weekly, but do not groom the pet in the presence of the allergic or asthmatic.
- Remove clothing worn after grooming or playing with pets, but keep it out of the bedrooms or sleeping areas, and wash clothing.
- Use air purifiers with high efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filters throughout the house.
- Use HEPA vacuum cleaners or high efficiency vacuum cleaner bags. These reduce the amount of dust, allergen and pollens pumped back into the air by the vacuum cleaner.
- Litter boxes should be placed in an area unconnected to the air supply for the rest of the home.
- Keep the home or facility clean.



HOW CAN I REDUCE DISEASE TRANSMISSION FROM MY PETS?

- Keep your pet up-to-date on all pertinent vaccinations.
- Keep your pet free of fleas and ticks. Both fleas and ticks are capable of feeding on people and passing on disease.
- Establish a "No licking and no kissing" rule. This can lead to exposure to pathogens and allergens.
- Establish firm hand-washing rules. Children and their care-takers should wash up after handling pets (especially reptiles), after handling pet food and treats and after cleaning up after the pets.
- Do not feed your pet raw meat.
- Keep sandboxes covered to prevent cats from using it as a litter box.
- Do not allow pets on counters or other surfaces where food is prepared.
- Do not allow pets on counters or other surfaces where food is prepared, and do not let the pet lick tableware or silverware that people use.

ECO-HEALTHY CHILD CARE®

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