

From: lissa [lissa@lissa.net]
Sent: Saturday, December 25, 2004 9:06 PM
To: ExtMAGDRL@yahoogroups.com
Subject: [ExtMAGDRL] DOE Topic #5: Allergic to your Dane?

Hi All,

For years my husband rarely had a cold. Then in summer 1998, we installed double-pane ultra insulating windows throughout. Starting that next winter, he suffered from what we thought were back-to-back colds. After dealing with constant sniffles for a couple of winters, he got tested for allergies. He found out that he's allergic to a number of indoor pollutants -- including pet dander. Luckily, he just pops an Allegra and he's fine!

Like with many people, his pet allergies weren't such a big problem until winter. But as we seal out cold drafts, those little flakes that our Danes shed all year round sometimes become a big wintertime problem. Hopefully this week's Dog Owner Education topic on dog allergies will help sufferers live more peacefully with their furkids. It's excerpted from an article that's posted on Harlequin Haven's web site.

Allergic To Your Pet?
Dan Meakin, DVM

Approximately one in five Americans is allergic to one kind of animal or another. Unfortunately, the allergy victim may not find out about his or her sensitivity until a pet comes into the home. Usually allergy sufferers can live in harmony with their pets if they are willing to work at it. Try these suggestions.

1. An allergy can build up very gradually at any age or can strike very suddenly. Don't think that just because you have always been around animals that you cannot become allergic to them. There is even an organization for veterinarians who are allergic to animals through which they share their knowledge in coping with their common problem.
2. Symptoms of sneezing, wheezing, skin rashes, and itchy eyes can mean a cold or they may be an allergy to any number of things. If you have recurring symptoms, see an allergist. If you are allergic to animals, a series of shots to desensitize you may be prescribed.
3. There are many over the counter and prescription medications to help relieve the drippy nose or throbbing head. While these drugs may help those who have mild or occasional allergy symptoms, usually the best solution is changing the environment.
4. The most effective way to minimize the allergy is to keep your pet clean. Most people are not actually allergic to animal fur, but to the dander (dead skin flaking off.) You can control allergens by keeping the coat healthy, clean, and free of dander. Food supplements and topical preparations are available at your veterinarian to help prevent dry skin and excessive shedding. Brush your pet at least twice a week with a bristle brush. Wire brushes often just loosen up more dander.
5. For severe allergies, keep the dog and the allergy victim apart as much as is possible. This means not only sleeping in separate beds, but in separate rooms. Keep the animal out of the allergy sufferer's bedroom at all times. Creation of other "animal free" areas of the house may also help a great deal.

Some other tips to help alleviate allergies, particularly in the allergy victim's bedroom are: remove indoor "dust collectors" like carpets, drapes, and upholstered furniture; use hardwood floors and furniture made of wood, metal, or vinyl; cover mattresses with plastic; use only pillows made of synthetic materials; cover heating vents with cheese cloth; change or clean filters on heating/air conditioning units frequently; remove books and stuffed animals; vacuum and dust every day. Air cleaners are also becoming more and more popular.

Thanks for educating yourselves to benefit all dog owners!

Lissa Scott
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"A dog is the only thing on earth that loves you more than he loves himself." - Josh Billings

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