

ASTHMA TRIGGERS: PETS

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Pets can be a wonderful addition to our lives, but they can also make asthma worse. All warm-blooded animals such as dogs, cats, birds, guinea pigs, gerbils and others produce substances in their fur or feathers and saliva that can cause allergic reactions.

BACKGROUND

For people with asthma, pets such as fish or reptiles (snakes, iguanas or other lizards) are better. However good hand washing is important when handling reptiles as they carry a bacteria called Salmonella. Because young children (5 yrs. and under) often don't wash their hands well, reptiles are better pets for older children.

EDUCATIONAL MESSAGES

However, if you have a warm-blooded pet that is very special to you, there are some things you can do to help reduce the animal's effect on asthma.

- The best thing you can do is keep the pet out of the house. However that may not be possible or desirable.
- Keep pets out of the bedroom of the person with asthma and keep that person's bedroom door closed. A HEPA air filter in the bedroom can help remove pet allergens from the air.
- Keep the pet out of the play area of a child with asthma.
- Vacuum bedroom and cloth-covered furniture twice a week and other rooms and cloth-covered furniture weekly. Use a sticky lint roller brush to remove pet hair from furniture if vacuuming doesn't remove it all.
- Put a pet blanket over your pet's favorite spot and wash the blanket weekly.
- Removing carpet, drapes and cloth-covered furniture will help because these trap triggers that come from pets.
- Bathe pets often and wipe your pet's feet upon entering the home.

FOLLOW-UP VISITS

- Ask if any pets are still in the house and what kinds. (If any allergen-producing pets present, repeat pet protocol. Indicate in tracking system that pet is present).

SUPPLIES

- HEPA air filters (if available)
- PAWS pamphlet on how to place your pet

EDUCATION HANDOUTS

- Pets and asthma client handout

REFERRALS

- PAWS (425-787-2500 extension 806)