



DANDERS AND EPIDERMALS

Up to two thirds of the households in the United States own or have owned some type of pet. Dogs and cats are the most popular of all these pets, but recent years have given rise to the popularity of other animals such as rodents, birds and reptiles.

Individuals who are allergic to epidermal's may experience symptoms of clear nasal drainage, sneezing, itching of the throat, burning of the eyes, asthma, shortness of breath, dermatitis, or coughing when exposed to the offending allergen. Many believe that the animal hair, or dander, causes the greatest degree of offense; however, recent studies show that there is clinical evidence that allergenic components are found also in the saliva and urine of some animals. Cat dander and saliva seem to cause the most allergic manifestations. Dog dander and saliva are also quite allergenic as well as rodent urine.

The primary source of exposure is in the home. Individuals working in research labs also have a greater risk of daily exposure. Those considering a move will benefit by inquiring as to whether former residents have kept pets. Steam cleaning the carpet may be helpful in reducing the amount of dander, but generally does not eliminate all dander.

Since the offender is most often a family pet, there is generally great reluctance to remove the pet from the home. Products, such as Allerpet, inhibit the release of dander, thus limiting the exposure levels. The allergic patient may find relief in using products such as this and bathing the animal more frequently. It is also important to keep the pet out of the allergic individual's bedroom and never allow the pet to sleep with the patient or on the bed. If these efforts are ineffective, it is then advisable to remove that pet from the home environment for at least 1-2 months, if symptoms are lessened, permanent removal may be necessary for the benefit of the patient.