

Hypoallergenic Dog? Not likely, according to National Jewish Health

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DENVER — Can the Obama family and millions of other families with an allergic member find a hypoallergenic dog to keep as a pet? Not likely, according to National Jewish Health Physicians.

Harold Nelson, Professor of Medicine, and [Rohit Katial](#), Associate Professor of Medicine, offer answers to common questions:

1. Is there any such thing as a hypo-allergenic dog or cat?

Nelson: Not by breed. Individual dogs and cats probably vary in allergenicity, but there is currently no way to predict which ones will be lower and which higher in allergen output.

Katial: Most allergist feel that cross breeding to produce a possible "hypoallergenic" dog was not successful and thus all dogs should be considered to be allergenic. The allergen is produced in saliva and sebaceous glands and the dander is just the carrier for the allergen. Thus, the idea that less hair may make a dog hypo allergenic is not accurate. Even those who believe that there are "hypo allergenic" dogs acknowledge that "hypoallergenic" does not equate to allergen free.

2. If you have a pet is there anything you can do to reduce allergies or asthma?

Nelson: In order of effectiveness:

- 1) Keep the pet outdoors
- 2) Keep the pet away from living areas with carpeting and upholstered furniture, especially keeping the pet out of the bedroom.
- 3) An air cleaner is probably of little benefit unless the pets is limited to areas with wooden or tiled floors.
- 4) Allergy shots will help, but elimination of exposure is cheaper and more effective.

Katial: One can reduce the animal allergen load in a house with several measures:

- 1) The most obvious, keep the pet outdoors.
- 2) However, if the pet is 100% indoors then washing the animal frequently (weekly) can help reduce the allergen that is produced in the saliva and sebaceous glands of the animal and transferred to dander from licking action of the pet. Washing reduces the allergen load.
- 3) Also a HEPA filter in the furnace will help reduce the circulating levels in homes that have central forced air AC and heat.
- 4) Keep the pet out of the bedroom to reduce exposure for the many hours spent in bedrooms.

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