



Cat Adoption Information: Allergies

Unfortunately, doctors are finding more and more that there is no such thing as a truly "hypoallergenic" cat or dog. The only animals that are truly hypoallergenic are scaly animals (lizards, snakes, etc.)

The breeds you may think of as hypoallergenic are actually *less* allergenic: often people with allergies won't react to them, but if the allergy is severe, even those breeds can cause a reaction. All cats produce allergens, and each individual person reacts differently to each animal. So, if your allergy is mild, you may be able to find a domestic shorthaired cat who you don't react to. PAWS rarely gets Russian Blue, Sphynx, Bengal, or other special cat breeds, so you may want to consider a breed-specific rescue for those.

What we recommend for someone with allergies is something called the "towel test." You will come in with a few small towels that you can rub on any cat you like. Place each towel in a separate plastic bag and label the bag with the cat's name. Take the towels home, and spend a few hours with each one (one at a time so you know which cat is affecting you). Rub the towel on your hands/arms, leave it on your shoulder while watching TV, and eventually rub it on your face and neck. If you have a reaction, immediately remove the towel and wash off!

If you find a cat that doesn't cause problems, you can come back and adopt! The timing of process can get a little tricky, since we cannot hold animals, so it is possible that the cat may be adopted by the time you can come back. However, it's a system we've found usually works well.

Please understand that kittens DO NOT produce their adult allergens yet, so they are not eligible for this testing. Cats must be at least one year old for the test to be accurate.

Please also note that this allergy test - and all of our matchmaking services - are available to you once your adoption application has been approved.