

Low-Shedding & 'Hypoallergenic' Dog Breeds



What causes allergies?

The cause of any allergic reaction to dogs is a protein, and, in the dog, this is found in their saliva and dander (dead skin cells). In rare cases where allergic symptoms are only observed with exposure to male dogs, this can be linked to a prostate protein in the urine.

There are no significant differences between breeds on the amount of allergens produced, though there may be some variability in their genetic make-up.

There is a difference in breeds regarding the amount of hair shed, and as the allergens adhere to the coat/hair/fur, a lower shedding dog can reduce exposure and thus produce a reduced reaction, although even hairless dog breeds can cause an allergic response in some individuals.

Size is also a factor, as smaller breeds produce less dander and are often cleaned more often, therefore bringing less outdoor allergens into the home.

Cross-breeds

Cross-breeds are often marketed as 'hypo-allergenic', however genetics are never a guarantee, there will be variability even within the same litter, and the rate/severity that a dog produces allergy-inducing symptoms will change as the dog matures. If we consider a popular crossbreed, the Labrador Retriever x Poodle (commonly referred to as a Labradoodle), the Labrador is generally a HIGH shedding breed, therefore mixing with a Poodle (1st Generation) statistically there is a fair likelihood of the resulting cross still being a high shedder. Beware any breeder promising what is biologically impossible!

What you can do to help

The amount of allergen released can be reduced by regular bathing of the dog HOWEVER dogs with healthy skin and a flourishing biome should not be shampooed regularly. Over shampooing in young dogs may predispose the dog to allergies in later life, and has been implemented in the increased occurrence of allergies in white and light-coloured breeds, as they are often bathed more frequently.

To reduce allergen release, this can be achieved with grooming using a damp brush or cloth.

If shampooing is required for hygiene reasons (such as your dog's been rolling in fox poo!) then we recommend mild baby shampoo or oatmeal products.

The cleanliness of the home and dog-free zones within the home will also be determining factors on the degree of allergic reaction. The person with the allergies will likely also have a variable reaction (both symptoms and level of trigger) seasonally, such as during winter being inside the house more.

In some cases, some individuals can become desensitised with an increasing time spent with dogs.

In summary, there is no such thing as a hypoallergenic dog breed! If you're looking for a lower-shedding breed, then read on...



Below is a small list of breeds of dogs which may be lower-shedding:

Airedale Terrier
Afghan Hound
American Hairless Terrier
Argentine Pila
Australian Silky Terrier
Basenji
Bedlington Terrier
Bichon Frise
Bolognese
Border Terrier
Bouvier des Flandres
Brussels Griffon
Cairn Terrier
Chinese Crested (Hairless and Powderpuff)
Coton de Tulear
Dandie Dinmont
Greyhound
Havanese
Hungarian Puli (Puli Dog)
Irish Water Spaniel
Kerry Blue Terrier
Komondor
Lagotto Romagnolo
Lhasa Apso
Löwchen (Little Lion Dog)
Maltese Terrier
Peruvian Inca Orchid (Hairless)
Petit Basset Griffon Vendeen
Poodle (Toy, Miniature, and Standard)
Portugese Water Dog
Schnauzer (Miniature, Standard or Giant)
Scottish Terrier
Saluki
Sealyham Terrier
Shih Tzu
Soft-Coated Wheaten Terrier
Spanish Water Dog
Tibetan Terrier
West Highland White Terrier
Whippet
Xoloitzcuintli (Mexican Hairless)
Yorkshire Terrier