

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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## Allergic to Dogs?

The Airedale Terrier, the Cockapoo, and the Italian Greyhound—if you are allergic to dogs, but would love to have one, these are names you need to know.

Anyone who has ever longed for a pooch and has been told by his or her doctor not to get one because of an allergy to dogs knows how devastating that news can be. For example, a few years ago, my neighbor's son wanted a dog and after a while his family decided to get him one. They all went to the kennel and after the boy had held a number of dogs, he became especially attached to one: a handsome German Shepherd puppy.



The boy's parents bought him the dog and took it home with them. Days later, the boy noticed a shortness of breath, an itchy rash that would not go away, and eyes that would not stop watering. While at a routine checkup at the doctor, the boy was informed that he had a dog allergy. His parents told the boy that he would have to find a new home for his new puppy. Tears streamed down the child's face.

While some people simply accept the idea that they cannot have a dog because of their allergies, others decide to get one anyway and live with the negative side effects. But having a dog when you are allergic to it can be a bittersweet experience. On one hand you love your dog. On the other hand, the itchy eyes and runny nose make you feel miserable. But don't worry. There is hope.

Experts say that the Airedale Terrier, Cockapoo, and Italian Greyhound are among the many breeds of dogs that can be considered *hypoallergenic*, meaning they are far less likely to cause allergic reactions in their owners than other breeds. The worst dogs for allergy sufferers are the German Shepherd, Springer Spaniel, and Dachshund. Experts recommend that dog owners who have allergies stay away from these dogs.

Contrary to popular belief, it is not a dog's hair that causes problems for people with allergies. It is a dog's saliva and the tiny specs of dander found on a dog's hair. Not surprisingly, experts recommend that those with allergies get dogs that don't produce a lot of dander and don't drool so much.

The choice for dog lovers with allergies has often come down to having a dog and feeling sick or not having a dog and feeling, well, not complete. But not anymore. An entire dog industry has sprouted up to promote, breed, and cross breed dogs that are not likely to cause their owners problems.