



Founded March 2002
Member of the
Governing Council of the Cat Fancy

THE SIBERIAN CAT CLUB

*Dedicated to the Promotion and Development of the
Siberian Breed within the UK
Supporting Owners and Breeders alike*



Allergy advice for prospective new owners of Siberian Cats.

In recent years hypoallergenic cats have repeatedly made news headlines. What is "hypoallergenic" where cats are concerned, and what are "reasonable expectations" for allergy sufferers at this time?

Feline allergen is a very small glycoprotein created in the salivary (saliva), lacrimal (tears), sebaceous (skin), and perianal glands. Salivary Fel d1 becomes airborne during grooming, sebaceous Fel d1 tends to be distributed across the fur, with the highest levels being found near the skin. Perianal glands secrete the allergen onto the faeces. The highest concentration of Fel d1 is found in the perianal glands.

Feline allergen (Fel d1) is found only in cats and accounts for up to 60% of cat allergies. Typical reactions to the allergen vary, but includes symptoms ranging from mild runny nose and itchy eyes, to severe reactions such as swollen eyes, hives or difficulty breathing. Individuals allergic to cats and not other animals are usually allergic only to Fel d1. The allergen is very stable, and can remain in a home for six months after removal of the cat.

On-going research shows that all cats produce some Fel d1, but the amounts are quite varied. Studies by Siberian Research have shown there is a very strong correlation between the allergen level in saliva and the perceived allergic reaction in highly allergic individuals. Siberians with very low allergen levels pass this trait to some (but not all) of the kittens in the litter.

Production and secretion of the Fel d1 allergen is controlled by hormones and stress. In normal cats, the highest levels are found in un-neutered males. In very low-allergen Siberians, the males and females have similar levels of Fel d1. Some of the lowest levels have been found in Siberian males. (Information From www.siberianresearch.com)

Allergy Visits.

Before embarking on an allergy visit to a breeder's home you need to discuss the severity of the symptoms of your allergy. It is strongly advised that if you visit a breeder you should take your medication with you for your allergies but not to take it prior to your visit. People with severe allergies should consult with a doctor about the planned visit and take advice from them on whether the visit is advisable.

It is also advised from the Siberian Research Site that nursing queens are good to see and handle as they are at a less reactive stage, kittens coats will carry more Fel-d1 due to mothers washing the kittens and also from dust within the litter tray so an accurate visit might not be achieved.

On visiting the breeder you should not be exposed to other pets or another breed of cat as this can affect the results of an allergy visit.

You should be given the opportunity to handle several cats and you are advised to bring the cat close to your face and see what reaction if any you have. The time scale for reactions vary but a general rule is within 15 – 20 minutes you will show some reaction, if you are a mild allergy sufferer you may need a longer exposure to the cats and kittens.

If you react whilst on the visit excuse yourself and go and wash your hands and face and take your medication and if possible change your clothing if you have a severe reaction.

The Siberian Cat Club Committee would advise that allergy sufferers take time to think about the decision whether or not to pursue the purchase of a kitten; it is advisable to go home and see if any symptoms of a reaction appears within a few hours if not then contact the breeder and arrange the purchase of a kitten. Deposits are taken in good faith but generally are non-refundable if you decide to decline a kitten at a later date.

*PLEASE NOTE – some breeders do charge for allergy sittings, the Siberian Cat Club does not endorse or encourage this; this is down to individual breeders. It is worth noting that breeders do give up a considerable amount of time to support allergy visitors and it is strongly recommended that if your visit is a positive one or not you feedback to the breeder so they can advise you.

The Myths on the internet regarding allergy advice.

- Males give a greater reaction than females – NOT TRUE!
- The colour of the cat can be linked to the severity of allergy reaction – NOT TRUE!
- Cats of solid colour (eg - Black, Blue) are not real Siberians so can cause a reaction – NOT TRUE! The breed has 124 colours and they are all Siberians.
- Cats that have colour point ancestry or are colour points have more Fel-d1 – NOT TRUE!

Many breeders have placed kittens of all colours and of both genders into allergy homes and the kittens have grown into much loved adult cats.

A Siberian is a breed of cat and the Fel-d1 results are not fully understood some work has been completed regarding testing but it is not 100% accurate. You need to visit a breeder and make an assessment of whether or not a Siberian is suited to you. The cat is not the one with the allergy it is the human and so the reality of whether you are allergic or not lies with you. Ask questions of the breeder and don't believe everything on the internet as a lot of information is not factually correct.