



Pet-friendly materials for allergic pets

The modern pet world is focused on animal welfare. Yet allergies can be the cause of great suffering for pets. So, what considerations are important for the pet industry when it comes to supplying allergy-free products?

What causes an allergic reaction?

With allergies, the immune system reacts or is sensitive to a particular substance (allergen): usually proteins from plants, insects, animals or foods. In dogs, their skin can itch, swell, or they may cough, sneeze and wheeze, lose fur, or may even vomit or get diarrhoea. It is essential that, in such cases, pet owners seek veterinary advice. After all, symptoms can also be caused by a large number of other medical conditions.

Pet beds to help with allergies

Pets can be allergic to dust mite debris. Beds made from naturally hypoallergenic materials, including high-density foam (medical grade or memory foam), makes it harder for dust mites to thrive in such a habitat.

The PetFusion Ultimate Dog Bed has been designed in such a way that it is possible to detach every part of the bed, making it exceedingly easy to wash frequently. As for fabrics: cotton, hemp or tightly woven micro-fibre fabric are less likely to cause problems. On the other hand, synthetic fabrics manufactured using certain chemicals, such as flame retardants, are known to be allergenic.

Collars, harnesses and leads can also be designed to prevent sensitivities from developing. A softer collar,

such as a cotton or hemp design, rather than nylon or webbing, is an allergen-friendly option. Not only are they less likely to cause an allergic reaction, but they are also easy to wash and less likely to irritate a dog's fur when this may already be sensitive for other reasons.

Anti-allergy pet toys

Toys with soft stuffing may harbour dust mites, so need frequent washing and must be durable. A flat dog toy, such as the Beco Stuffing Free range, is allergen-free and still fun for the dog. Chew toys containing ingredients such as sweet potato may be considered for a dog on an elimination diet. On the other hand, chew toys such as the PetzPoint Orb are specifically designed to be allergen-free.

Steel bowls

Although rare, some cats can be allergic to plastics. Such an allergic reaction causes irritation around the mouth. In such cases, steel bowls are preferable. ♦



Karen Wild

Dog trainer and pet behaviourist
info@pawprintpets.com
pawprintpets.com