



MAN'S BEST friend



by Jeffrey Allan Payne

REMEMBER WHEN THE MEDIA WAS ABUZZ ABOUT WHAT TYPE OF DOG WAS GOING TO OCCUPY THE OBAMA WHITE HOUSE? As a result of all that clamour, many became familiar with the Portuguese Water Dog. Not only does "Bo Obama" possess an affable, playful, energetic personality, his breed is one canine category that is considered hypo-allergenic.

Don't think that careful consideration wasn't given toward adopting a non-shed dog. Imagine the outrage if Republicans learned that dog hair was being shed upon Abraham Lincoln's bed, or consider the international incident caused if visiting heads of state succumbed to asthmatic attacks, caused by Bo's dander.

You'd never think that a creature that's covered with hair, enjoys rolling in mud puddles, loves to rub his face on the lawn, and prefers never taking baths could produce dander and allergens. The truth is: that lummo of a pal lying on your sofa could be a source of miserable discomfort and even life threatening illness for individuals with allergies.

PORTUGUESE WATER DOG

- > The breed is classified as "working class" by the American Kennel Club because they were taught to herd fish into fishermen's nets, to retrieve lost tackle or broken nets, and to act as couriers from ship to ship, or ship to shore.
- > They are an exceptionally intelligent breed and have a lot of stamina, and are also very protective and alert, making them excellent family pet.
- > As a promise to their daughters, Michelle and Barack Obama said they would buy a dog if their father won the election. But they didn't need to because Senator Edward Kennedy bought them a Portuguese water dog, who they named "Bo," as a gift.



10-15 PER CENT OF US SUFFER FROM PET ALLERGIES, WITH CAT ALLERGY TWICE AS COMMON AS DOG ALLERGY.



*"THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN AN ITCH AND AN ALLERGY IS ABOUT ONE HUNDRED BUCKS."
Anonymous*

Dogs are loaded with potential allergens. Most times, it's not the hair itself that's causing the problem; it's what attaches itself to the hair. The dog's hair picks up pollen and dust that stick to each hair follicle. Therefore, larger dogs with longer fur have a tendency to generate more allergens than smaller, shorter haired dogs. For one thing, more surface area equals more hair. However, according to allergy experts, even hairless dogs are not totally allergen free.

How severe of a physical condition can allergies to pets become? For those who suffer, pet allergies aren't just inconveniences; they can even be leading risk factors for developing asthma.

Some people are even allergic to dogs' saliva. There's literally no way to counteract that. Watch any dog for a couple minutes; their mouths are like artesian wells. Even breeds that aren't characteristic "droolers" have no shortage of liquid exuding from those big happy gaping "pie holes." Bottom

line: coming in contact with dogs, means encountering "dog spit." Some people, due to pre-disposed biophysical entrapments, can literally break into hives because of just one friendly lick.

How allergenic is a particular dog? That varies from person to person. It's advised that you spend at least half an hour playing with a new dog, before you make the decision to bring it home. Make sure that each person in your household spends a period in close contact with the fur. If your breeder is a long distance away, send them a clothing item and ask them to place it near the dog for a day or two. Then, ask them to send it back in a plastic bag. Have any affected person wear the item or inhale from its surface for a few hours. That should accurately gauge their physical reaction.

You can save time by culling your dog search, first ignoring thick-coated breeds like Golden Retrievers, Cocker Spaniels, and Great Pyrenees. There are a number of so-called hypo-allergenic breeds that shed less or are even hairless,

thus decreasing some risk of allergic symptoms.

Research breeds like the Bichon Frisé, Havanese, Shih Tzu, or Coton de Tulear. These are smaller breeds, lap dogs if you will. However, one does not have to limit their choices to the wee canine set. There are plenty of big playful outdoorsy dogs like Standard Poodles, Greyhounds, and Wheaten Terriers that can hold their own at any dog park and carry less allergens than their big-haired counterparts.

So, if you or someone in your habitat suffers from symptoms like itchy swollen eyes, sneezing, skin rash, stuffy nose, and in extreme cases, difficulty breathing, you have two choices: don't get a dog at all or explore hypo-allergenic breeds until you find a match. ☺

GREYHOUND

- > Greyhound is a breed of hunting dog, primarily bred for coursing game and racing. They have recently become popular though as a pedigree show dog and family pet.
- > Greyhounds are known to be a gentle and intelligent breed. They are very loyal dogs as they often become attached to their owners.
- > Due to their shape of long, powerful legs and slim build, greyhounds can reach an average race speed of 65 kilometres per hour or 18 metres per second.
- > **Famous Greyhounds:** "Santa's Little Helper" is the family greyhound dog on the animated comedy show The Simpsons; the logo of the bus company Greyhound Bus Lines is a greyhound.

