CNIB Guide Dogs FAQ – Allergies

Will CNIB provide hypo-allergenic guide dog options?

Currently, the only breeds we offer are Black or Yellow Labrador Retrievers, Golden Retrievers, or crosses of those breeds. If you have an allergy to dogs but are interested in a guide dog, there are schools that train Standard Poodles or cross breeds with poodles to provide hypo-allergenic options.

For a list of other guide dog schools in Canada and the United States, visit:

Does a guide dog team still have the right to access if someone in the building has an allergy or fear of dogs?

Yes. The rights of both individuals need to be considered and a solution reached that will respect the dignity and needs of both people.

Management procedures can be put in place to meet these needs. For example, if people must share a room they can be assigned to separate areas of the room, reducing the risk of exposure to dander.

Allergy Information

* Dog allergies are less prevalent than allergies to dust mites, pollen, paint and cleaning product

efore putting management practices into place it is recommended that the cause of the allergy be confirmed by a doctor

* Allergic reactions to dogs are caused by dander (flakes of dead skin) not the dog's hair or fur.
* Regular grooming of a guide dog (once a week or more) minimizes dander

Guide Dog Information

* Guide dogs provide independence, safety and mobility to their handlers
* guide dogs go through 18 months to two years of intensive training as well as ongoing training support throughout their working life to ensure they are well behaved in public. They are trained to lie at their handlers feet and not bother other people.
* Guide dog handlers are trained to maintain high standards of grooming and cleanliness and to make regularvisits to the vet

It is because of these high standards that guide dogs are not considered a risk to the hygiene of an establishment.

If you have an allergy:

* Let the guide dog owner know
* Avoid physical contact with the dog or wash your hands after contact

If you have a guide dog:

* Wash your hands after contact with your dog
* Regulardly weipe down or vacuum areas where the dog lies