

Allergies & More Allergies

Allergies are one of the most common health problems for pets today.

The animal's immune system overreacts to the environment-pollen, dust, food, household chemicals or insect bites.

This can set off an alarm in the immune system, causing it to pump out large amounts of inflammatory cells, hormones and histamines. The result is itchy, irritated skin or intestinal disturbances such as diarrhea.

Allergies are life-long, chronic problems. There is a genetic predisposition to developing allergies, but allergy symptoms can appear on any dog or cat at almost any age.

Types of Allergies

Pet allergies generally fall into four categories: food, inhalant, contact and flea allergies.

Food Allergies

The most common food allergens are *wheat* and *corn*. We recommend avoiding all wheat and corn products for all potential allergy patients since the allergic effects of a food can stay in the pet's body for up to EIGHT weeks.

A pet can also become allergic to food additives or preservatives in commercial pet food. Thus, it is important to feed a high quality, natural food at all times. Make sure your treats are also non-allergenic!

Food allergies can manifest as digestive disturbances such as vomiting/diarrhea. Another typical symptom of food allergies is chronic ear or skin infections. The infections often clear up with medication, but return soon after treatment is stopped.

Inhalant Allergies

Inhalant allergies (also called atopy) is similar to human hay fever. The pet becomes allergic to grass or weed pollens, dust, or molds. These allergens generally produce severe itching in pets.

For dogs, the itching is most commonly seen on the feet (i.e. they chew or bite their paws constantly). Other areas that may be affected are the groin, armpits, ears, belly, or sometimes the itching will involve the entire body.

In cats, most itching is seen on the head or neck area or dermatitis and hair loss on the belly.

"Hot Spots" are another manifestation of environmental allergies. These are hairless, irritated, red oozing sores appearing anywhere on the body.

Inhalant allergies are often seasonal - especially in the spring and late summer-fall when pollen counts are the highest.

Contact Allergies

Contact allergies occur when an animal's skin comes into contact with the item that he is allergic to. Examples may include fabrics such as wool, synthetic chemicals such as laundry detergent or household cleaners. Chemical flea collars commonly cause this type of reaction.

The skin at the point of contact is irritated, it may itch, become thickened or discolored, have a strong odor and/or lose hair from constant biting or scratching.

Flea Allergies

Animals aren't allergic to fleas, but to the proteins that fleas secrete in their saliva when they bite. Affected animals can itch severely for even five days from a single flea bite!

Treatment Options

Medical therapy is divided into two categories - alleviating symptoms vs. desensitizing the pet.

You can reduce the allergy symptoms with medications such as antihistamines or steroids. Antihistamines often cause sleepiness or excitable behavior as a side effect. Steroids have many potential side effects and are recommended for short term relief only.

Essential fatty acids (found in fish or flaxseed oil) have been shown to be a beneficial supplement for allergies.

Specific shampoos and sprays can also alleviate some allergy symptoms and can be an important part of controlling the problem.

Allergy Testing

This is a desensitization treatment where the patient is given "allergy shots". After specific sources of allergens are identified (by blood allergy testing), very small amounts of the allergens are injected into the body to hypo-sensitize or desensitize the patient to the true or natural allergen. As time passes the immune system may become less reactive to the allergies.

Bioresonance Therapy

Bioresonance or Bicom therapy is holistic approach to boosting the immune system, clearing allergens and sensitivities in the body. Can be useful to test and treat any potential allergen or sensitivity - including foods, pollens, chemicals, metals and vaccines.

Bicom therapy is a non-invasive method to tap into the body's biomagnetic information.

Countrycare Animal Complex is one of the premier facilities offering this European, Holistic therapy. See the holistic section of our website for more details.