



CareVets Ltd

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Caring for your pets as our own

Talking about allergies.....

What's not to be allergic about?

- pollen, plants, insects, fleas, food, household products, dust mites...
- scratching, shaking their head, watery eyes, chewing paws, dirty ears, pulling out hair, licking paws
- rashes or reddened skin

CAUSES

Try not to buy from parents with allergies!

- TRIGGERS: normally harmless substances - pollens grass, mould, house dust mites, parasites, food
- AGE: usually starts age 1-6, but it can be mild initially may not become noticeable in the first few years.
- BREEDING: Often inherited from a parent so some breeds are more likely to develop allergies.
- Try to avoid buying pups from parents with allergies and avoid breeding dogs with allergies as by doing this we are perpetuating the problem.

SYMPTOMS

Ears, feet, bum, body.....

Allergies can get worse over time or be seasonal.

- AREAS: ears, feet, tummy, face, armpits, anal glands, eyes
- They may scratch, shake, lick, and you may notice a strange odour, greasy skin or coat, red skin, dirty ears, they may be dragging their bottom...

STAGES

1. INFLAMMATION: Initially an area of your pet's skin your pet will become inflamed, ('flare up') - obvious on tummy, armpits or face, less so in ears or between the toes. Your pet will then get itchy!
2. YOUR PET WILL THEN GET ITCHY!
3. INFECTION: All areas of skin contain bacteria, but when skin becomes inflamed if left untreated, this bacteria then begins to overgrow and leads to infection. We call it secondary because its a result of the underlying condition.
4. MALASSEZIA: A normal part of your pet's skin, but overgrows on inflamed skin and without treatment can cause secondary fungal infection.
5. RESISTANCE: Some bacteria and malasseiza are becoming resistant to treatment.
6. CHRONIC INFECTIONS: After a few weeks, infections can become chronic which are harder to treat.

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TESTING

Allergic dermatitis is a diagnosis of exclusion - all other causes should be excluded before making a diagnosis, so we may take samples of your pet's hair and skin.

- Skin scrapes - the surface of the skin is gently scraped and examined under a microscope. To rule out demodex mites - a normal bug on pet skin but one which can cause problems in large numbers
- Hair plucks - a few hairs are examined with a Wood's lamp to check for ringworm (dermatophytosis)
- Tape strips - tape is simply applied to the skin, first stained and then checked under a microscope to check which type of bacteria is present (cytology)
- Swabs - to check for appropriate antibiotics (culture and sensitivity testing)
- Blood tests - to rule out other potential causes such as thyroid and adrenal gland disorders, which can cause skin disease (and appear like allergy)
- Skin biopsy - small sections of skin are taken under general anaesthetic and examined by a specialist (histopathologist) at an external laboratory to check for changes, eg. ones that can be associated with autoimmune disorders (histopathology)
- Serologic (blood) allergy testing may be an option, which looks for antibodies in the blood, but the results can be inconsistent
- Intradermal testing may also be used to identify the cause of your pet's allergic reaction. This is where small amounts of test allergens are injected into the skin and wheal (a red bump) response is measured

TREATMENT

Examination of your pet is an essential step in creating a treatment plan for your pet

- Before recommending treatment, a physical examination is an important step in determining treatment and duration.
- The treatment will depend on what is causing your pet's allergic reaction. Some of the medications used to treat atopy are.
- Prednisolone, Cortavance, Apoquel, Cytopoint, chlorhexidine, Malaseb, antibiotics, antifungals, immunotherapy, hypoallergenic food.
- What is used and for how long will depend on a few things, which will be determined when we examine your pet.
- Treatment will often require alterations over time, and therefore monitoring and good communication between our team, and you.

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OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Most of the flea's life is spent off your pet so they may be living in your house

If you're seeing fleas easily - there are dozens of them hiding in your pet's coat and your home!

PARASITES: regularly using parasite treatment can achieve good control.

- Supermarket/petshop parasite treatments are often unreliable, fleas are resistant to many non-prescription treatments
- Environmental sprays are an effective way of getting rid of fleas in your home but toxic to pets, fish, plants so follow the instructions to the letter
- Wear gloves when using any parasite or environmental treatment

FOOD: Some allergies can at least partly be controlled by changing food.

- good quality hypoallergenic food
- given for 8 weeks
- no other food must be eaten in this time.

INFECTIONS: Secondary skin infection is common if not treated early

- may require regular bathing in medicated shampoo
- deeper infections require antibiotics
- can be prolonged if severe or resistant bacteria or malassezia.

MONITORING

A joint effort between us and YOU

Its important to see your pet weekly or monthly to monitor effectiveness of treatment

- FLARE UP: During this stage normally weekly
- STABLE: Usually monthly is all that is needed

- The frequency will be individual to your pet
- The treatment will tailored to the level of discomfort and the extent of any secondary problems.

It's very important to stay vigilant and your pet gets treatment as soon as the itching starts.

When left untreated.....

..... allergies can change your pet's personality - as your pet can be in constant discomfort due to itchy skin. You may not notice this as some pets will become very quiet. In some cases, with some types of infection (such as pseudomonas affecting the ear canal) the skin may be ulcerated, which is very painful. Its difficult to see, as it is often deep within the ear canal and can only be seen on otoscopic exam. The constant frustration your pet will experience can lead them to shy away, snap or scratch. Longstanding (chronic) ear infections can also lead to deafness.

We can only do this with your help, thanks for reading.

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