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Stop the Itch!

Is your pet constantly scratching during season changes? Does your pet become so itchy that the skin turns red and the hair begins to thin? Is your pet covered in scabs and sores? Your pet just may have allergies! Read below to learn the common signs of allergies in pets!

Allergies Are Itchy!

Allergies present differently in dogs and cats than they do in humans. Most of the time, pets with allergies tend to be itchy, and can scratch until their hair is pulled out or hot spots form. Why do pets get skin irritation, while humans get respiratory signs? This is because one of the main white blood cells that regulates allergies – mast cells – tend to congregate in the skin of dogs and cats, while they congregate in respiratory membranes in humans. When mast cells are activated by an allergen, histamines are released, which cause irritation to the surrounding tissues and leading to the clinical signs of allergies (skin irritation in pets and respiratory irritation in humans).

There are other forms of allergic reactions besides the common seasonal allergies as well. For example there are some pets that can have food allergies, which also presents as skin irritation, often throughout the entire body. Contact dermatitis is another type of allergy, where the pet touches something directly that they are allergic to, causing direct skin irritation, usually in the form of a localized rash. A final very common type of allergy is flea allergy dermatitis, where the pet displays a se-



What Can Be Done?

Allergies can be extremely frustrating for you and your pet; however, there are several treatments options available. Getting rid of the specific allergen (such as fleas) is always the first step. If this isn't a possibility, Apoquel is a daily tablet for dogs that helps with itchiness and inflammation from scratching. Another option is Cytopoint, which is an anti-allergy injection that lasts for 4-8 weeks. For cats, Atopica (cyclosporine) can help relieve allergy symptoms. For cats and dogs, there are several types of hypoallergenic diets that can help decrease or stop the clinical signs of allergies, whether it is a food allergy or from an environmental source!

Benadryl is not a harmful medication for your pet, and for some mild allergies it can be helpful. However, this medication tends to help by making your pet sleepy, which causes them to scratch less, rather than actually stopping the itchiness. If you have any questions about anti-allergy medication options for your pet, make sure to call your veterinarian today!



Best regards,
Rachel Rielinger, DVM



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