

Is it Possible Dogs and Cats can Suffer from Allergies Too?

The answer is yes! Like humans, dogs and cats can also suffer from pesky pollens and other environmental allergens! It is also possible that different types of foods can cause your pet to develop itchy, red and inflamed skin!

Two Types of Pet Allergies

1. Environmental Allergies:

Seasonal Allergies can occur with Dogs and Cats and are more common to pets with a weak or compromised immune system. Spring, Summer and Fall months are the most prevalent months for environmental allergens, unless you reside in an area that does not have a winter freeze, then symptoms can occur all year round. Common seasonal allergens for pets is ragweed, grasses, pollens, molds and trees.

Symptoms of seasonal allergies include irritated skin, but mostly the feet and underbelly where there has been greater exposure to grasses and pollens. In severe cases 'hotspots' will develop on the skin. Hotspots are inflamed, infected skin that occurs when your dog's natural bacteria overwhelms an area of his skin. Like humans, dogs and cats with seasonal allergies will also exhibit red watery eyes, runny nose, sneezing and coughing.

Common Treatments for Seasonal Allergies:

1. Bee Pollen sourced out of your region can improve your pets' immunity to allergies. Bee Pollen also promotes healthy skin and coat, aids and improves healing, increases energy and vitality and helps maintain a healthy weight. It also contains high levels of protein, vitamins and amino acids. As a result of its loaded health benefits, it strengthens the immune system and decreases susceptibilities to allergies.
2. Coconut Oil contains 90% saturated fats with medium chain triglyceride (MCT). MCT fats contain 40% lauric acid, which has antibacterial, antiviral and anti-fungal properties which all benefit a pet suffering from itchy skin and hot spots.
3. Quercetin is a bioflavonoid with anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties and is often called "Nature's Benadryl". You can purchase this over the counter at pet speciality stores. A common brand is the Vets Best Seasonal Allergy Support with Nettle, Perilla Leaf and Quercetin.
4. Frequent baths and/or foot soaks are important to remove any irritants from the paws, skin and coat. Be sure to use a gentle shampoo free of harsh chemicals and strong fragrances that could cause further irritation. Oatmeal baths or Shampoos with natural healing properties are also highly recommended.

2. **Food Allergies** have been increasingly common in many dogs and cats today. Mainly, because many pets are fed the same protein source day in and day out...and over several years. Think of yourself eating "chicken" for breakfast, lunch and dinner every day for years. We couldn't imagine having chicken several nights in a row, so why would we expect our pets eat the same thing every day? Instinctively, many dogs

and cats will stop eating their food because their bodies are literally sick of the same thing. After a period of time of eating the same food, the body will begin to reject the food and treat it as a toxin. This will create an antibody response resulting in inflamed and irritated skin.

Symptoms of food allergies are similar to environmental allergies seen in dogs and cats. The primary symptom is itchy skin affecting primarily the feet, ears, armpits and the area around the genitals. Symptoms may also include recurrent ear infections, hair loss, excessive scratching, hot spots, and skin infections.

Top 5 Food Allergens for dog or cats include Corn, Wheat, Soy, Chicken and Beef. Chicken and Beef are the most common ingredients in pet food, so it makes sense that many pets become allergic due to overfeeding. Corn, Wheat and Soy are low quality grains that a pet's digestive system is not designed to breakdown. When the body reacts to an allergen, it treats the food like a toxin and goes into antibody overload causing inflammation and skin irritation.

The Treatment of food allergies is simple. Change foods. First, remove corn, wheat and soy all together. Grain-free is preferable, but the primary goal is to eliminate poor quality ingredients and meat ingredients that have been most recently fed. A balanced fresh raw meat diet will have the greatest results, and in severe allergy cases, a raw meat diet is the only thing that works. Dogs and Cats have a very short digestive system, being 1/3 the length of ours. The more bioavailable (absorbent) the food, the easier it is on their digestive system to process.

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