



Look Familiar?

## FLEA Allergies

Fleas can cause severe and ongoing allergies in dogs and cats. Flea bites are painful and make your pet very itchy, PLUS fleas can cause anemia and infection. Fleas are very difficult to find when you try to look for them on your pet. And, in southern California, the flea season never goes away due to warmer climate almost all year long, wheat, grass and natural reservoirs (scrub, outdoors cats, grass, etc.). Fleas — small dark brown insects and ticks prefer temperatures of 65-80 degrees and humidity levels of 75-85% nothing is more purposeful for them than California weather.

Dogs and cats frequently get infested with fleas and ticks through contact with other infected animals or contact with fleas and ticks located in an environment where they thrive. Fleas have strong hind legs which allow it to jump from host to host (area to area, body to body, environment onto the host). Fleas jump they don't fly. A flea's bite will cause itching and some animals are more prone to inviting fleas as well as some animals are more susceptible to a flea bite which can cause severe itching, scratching and infection. In severe cases a pet will experience hair-loss, inflammation and even even secondary skin infections. Some pets are so sensitive to flea's saliva that a single bite causes the above reactions.

Fleas, mites and ticks operate under different living and surviving conditions. Just because your pet is scratching and biting him/herself doesn't necessarily mean they have fleas. They could have mites or ticks. How can you tell exactly what insect is making your pet a itching, biting and scratching Fleas formally known as pruritus, unlike mites and ticks do not like to burrow in the skin. Fleas scurry in a hurry along surface lines of the skin. Fleas are dark tan/brown colored and the size of a pin head. Fleas know they have a short lifespan when discovered and that's why they hide in the furriest areas. But if you pull a sneak attack the best place to see them running for cover is on your pet's belly and inner thighs.



## FLEA SHAMPOO WON'T GET RID OF FLEAS

Dogs and cats can also develop tapeworms after eating fleas and pets can transmit the tapeworms to humans — especially kids. Proper monthly flea and tick prevention is the key to keeping them off your pet and out of your home. Most of the over-the-counter flea medication (topical) are not effective and flea sprays and shampoos only work for a very short time (less than few hours because they don't repel). Research now recommends proper oral monthly flea and tick prevention. Even your indoor dogs and cats are not immune or protected against fleas and need monthly flea and tick prevention.

# The Best For Your Pet Ask Your Neighborhood Vet



**Dr. Kamran Nassi**  
Beverly Robertson Veterinary Clinic

## Allergies in Dogs and Cats

An allergy is a state of over-reactivity or hypersensitivity of the immune system to a particular substance called an allergen. Most allergens are proteins. The allergen protein may be of insect, plant or animal origin. Initial exposure of the dog and cat, or more likely multiple exposures, to the allergen may over-sensitize the immune system, such that a subsequent exposure to the same or related allergen causes an over-reaction. This means the immune response, which normally protects the animal against infection and disease, can actually be harmful to the body.



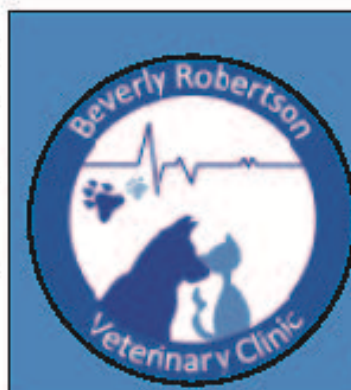
## Major General Allergy Categories In Dogs & Cats

**Food Allergies:** A food allergy can develop to almost any protein or carbohydrate component of food. It commonly develops in response to the food protein of a particular food origin; beef, pork, chicken, or turkey are commonly associated with food allergies. Feeding your pet table food especially foods containing gluten, dairy, spices and certain proteins can cause food allergy. Food allergy can develop at any age and cause itching, skin and ear infection, digestive disorders, and respiratory distress. Food allergies occur with other allergies, such as environment (inhalant) allergies. Treatment requires identifying the offending component(s) of the diet, eliminate them, or start the patient on a special hypoallergenic diet. It takes 10-12 weeks for all food products to be removed from the body, in which time the dog must eat a special diet exclusively for 10-12 weeks. It must be emphasized if the diet is not fed exclusively, it won't be a valid trial. Table food, treats or vitamins must be discontinued during the trial period.



**Atopy or Inhalant Allergies:** A simple way to think of atopy for pets would be to say that the pet inhales an airborne allergen, but instead of sneezing and sniffing, the pet gets itchy skin and starts chewing and licking himself or herself. Atopy in dogs has an inherited predisposition and they show their allergic signs between 1-3 years of age. Due to hereditary nature of the disease, several breeds, including golden retrievers, most terriers, Irish setters, Lhasa apsos, Dalmatians, bulldogs and Old English sheep dogs are more commonly atopic, but many dogs, including mixed breeds can have atopic dermatitis. The incidence is increasing both in man and animals. While it would be nice to have a blood test that could tell us if a pet's itching is due to atopy, it's important to realize that such a test does not exist. Atopy remains a clinical diagnosis, which means the diagnosis is made based on history, examination findings and skin testing. Proper monthly flea preventative, annual fecal testing are recommended for all indoor and outdoor pets. If your pet is chewing, biting itching him/herself — it's vital to bring your pet to a licensed veterinarian. Avoid giving human allergy relief medications as they could harm your pet.

At Beverly Robertson Veterinary Clinic we will discuss your pet's allergies and will make your little furry one comfortable. **BHV**



Brought to you by your neighborhood veterinarian  
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