

Food and Skin Allergies in Dogs

Allergies are a common issue for dogs, manifesting through various environmental factors. They can cause discomfort and health problems, so it's important to identify and manage them appropriately. The most prevalent types of allergies in dogs are food allergies, flea allergies, and skin allergies (atopy).



Food Allergies in Dogs

Overview:

Food allergies can develop at any age, often occurring after prolonged exposure to a specific food rather than from a new diet.

Symptoms:



- Itching all over the body or in specific areas (e.g., face)
- Vomiting

- Diarrhoea
- Blood or mucus in stool

Treatment:

1. **Diet Trial:** Your vet will recommend a special diet for 6 to 12 weeks, during which your dog must not consume anything else (including treats and chews).
2. **Monitoring:** Observe any improvements in symptoms during this period. A follow-up appointment with your vet will help determine the next steps.

Note: Conducting a diet trial can eliminate the need for long-term medications, which can have adverse effects on your dog's health.

Flea Allergies in Dogs**Overview:**

Flea allergies occur when a dog has an allergic reaction to flea saliva, leading to intense itching and irritation.

Symptoms:

- Severe itching, particularly around the base of the tail, back, and thighs
- Evidence of fleas or flea dirt

Treatment:

1. **Regular Flea Treatment:** Year-round flea prevention is essential for your dog and any other pets in the household.

2. **Home Treatment:** Deep clean carpets, bedding, and surfaces. Use household flea sprays carefully, following instructions to avoid harming pets and fish.

Note: Consult your vet if you have any concerns about flea treatments or if symptoms persist.

Skin Allergies in Dogs (Atopy)

Overview:

Atopy is an inherited skin condition common in many breeds, particularly terriers. Symptoms usually develop between 6 months and 3 years of age.

Symptoms:

- Increased itching, leading to licking, chewing, and rubbing
- Affected areas include paws, ears, face, tummy, groin, bottom, and inner thighs
- Possible skin infections, greasy skin, or rashes

Note: Dogs may be worse in summer due to pollen or grass allergies, but many are itchy year-round due to house dust mites.



Diagnosis:

There is no specific test for atopy. Your vet will rule out other causes of itchiness and may perform skin samples to check for parasites or infections. A diet trial may also be conducted to exclude food allergies.

Treatment:

While there is no cure for atopy, various treatments can help manage symptoms:

- **Medications:** Steroids or other medications to reduce the immune response.
- **Medicated Shampoo:** Bathing with medicated shampoo to soothe the skin.
- **Omega Fatty Acids:** Supplements that can help improve skin condition.
- **Regular Flea Treatment:** Essential to prevent further irritation.

Important: If using steroids, monitor your dog's diet to prevent weight gain, as these can increase hunger and thirst.

Neutering: For female dogs with atopy, your vet may recommend neutering to reduce symptom severity. It's also advised not to breed dogs with atopy, as the condition is inherited.

Conclusion

Identifying and managing allergies in dogs is crucial for their comfort and health. If you suspect your dog has an allergy, consult your veterinarian for proper diagnosis and treatment options tailored to your dog's specific needs.