

Hayfever in Dogs

Can Dogs Get Hay Fever? Here's What You Need to Know!

Just like us humans, dogs can suffer from hay fever! While we might experience itchy eyes, a runny nose, and constant sneezing, our furry friends tend to show their discomfort in different ways. The most common symptom of hay fever in dogs is actually itchy skin, which can be quite bothersome for them.



What Is Hay Fever?

So, what exactly is hay fever? It's an allergic reaction to pollen in the air, and it usually pops up during the spring and summer months. While allergies to pollen aren't as common in dogs as those triggered by fleas or house dust mites, they can still cause quite a bit of distress. Identifying the exact cause of your dog's allergies might require some testing, but knowing the symptoms is a good start.

Recognising Hay Fever Symptoms in Dogs



When it comes to dogs, hay fever often manifests as itchy skin rather than the classic sneezing and runny nose we experience. If your dog is allergic to pollen, they might start nibbling, rubbing, or scratching at:

- Their **paws**
- **Eyes, ears, mouth, and muzzle**
- **Armpits**
- **Abdomen**
- **Legs**
- The area around their **bum**
- **Groin**

You might notice that their skin looks flaky, red, or sore in these spots, or it might feel greasy. Sometimes, they may even lose patches of fur from all the rubbing or licking. But in some cases, their skin might appear perfectly normal, while they're still incredibly itchy. If you see these symptoms at times other than spring and summer, your dog could be allergic to something else—like fleas, dust mites, or even infections.

Constant scratching can lead to skin damage, making your pup more susceptible to bacterial and yeast infections. If you suspect your dog has hay fever or any allergies, it's best to book a visit with your vet.



When Is Hay Fever Season?

The timing of hay fever season for your dog can depend on the type of pollen they're sensitive to and where you live in the UK. Here's a quick rundown:

- **Tree pollen:** Late March to mid-May
- **Grass pollen:** Mid-May to July

- **Weed pollen:** End of June to September

Managing Hay Fever Symptoms

While there's no cure for hay fever, there are several ways to help your dog feel more comfortable:

- **Topical treatments:** Medicated shampoos, skin sprays, and creams can provide relief.
- **Wipes and cleaners:** Use these to help clean your dog's ears and skin.
- **Medications:** Antihistamines might help, but they can cause drowsiness and should only be given under your vet's guidance, as some can be toxic to dogs.
- **Essential fatty acids:** These supplements may help improve skin health.
- **Steroids:** Your vet might prescribe medication to reduce skin inflammation and relieve itching.
- **Immunotherapy:** This treatment can be effective for some dogs and may be more cost-effective for larger breeds.

If you think your dog is suffering from hay fever, reach out to your vet for personalised



treatment advice.

Tips for Managing Hay Fever at Home

In addition to treatments, there are several practical steps you can take to lessen your dog's hay fever symptoms:

- **Timing walks:** Take your dog out early in the morning or later in the evening when pollen counts are lower. If you live near the coast, the beach is a great spot, as pollen levels tend to be lower there.
- **Cleaning up:** After walks, wipe your dog's fur, skin, and paws with a damp cloth to remove any excess pollen. Regularly wash their bedding, too.
- **Air quality:** Consider using an air filter system in your home to help alleviate symptoms.
- **Frequent cleaning:** Vacuum your house regularly to keep allergens at bay.
- **Flea and worm treatments:** Stay on top of these treatments to reduce itching from other potential causes.

Types of Pollen That Can Affect Your Dog



If your dog undergoes an allergy test, you'll discover exactly what type of pollen triggers their allergies. Here's how to manage allergies based on specific pollen types:

- **Tree pollen:** Reduce walks when it's windy and dry, keep windows closed, and monitor the pollen forecast online.
- **Grass pollen:** Regularly mow your lawn to keep it short (just remember to keep your dog away while mowing). Keep them on a lead in grassy areas to prevent rolling around and getting pollen stuck in their fur.

- **Weed pollen:** Carefully plan walks, avoiding areas with overgrown weeds, and keep windows closed to prevent pollen from entering your home.

If you find that you need to cut back on walks due to hay fever, there are plenty of ways to keep your dog entertained and stimulated indoors. Check out our advice for fun indoor games for dogs!

By being proactive and informed, you can help keep your dog comfortable during hay fever season. Regular vet visits and treatments are key to managing their allergies effectively!