

Baker Institute For Animal Health

Allergies are damaging responses by the immune system to environmental substances or by foods that are normally harmless.

Chronic allergies present a long-term struggle for pets and owners, and can seriously diminish an animal's quality of life.

What is an allergy?

ALLERGIES

in Pets

Acute allergic attacks are brought on by things like insect stings or certain medications.

Most chronic allergies in pets fall into one of three categories: atopic dermatitis, respiratory, or food allergies.

TYPES

Atopic dermatitis

Seasonal or year-round – can be caused by pollen, mold, dander, dust, flea bites, and other irritants in the environment.

Respiratory allergies

Cats are particularly susceptible to developing a sensitivity to particles in the air.

Food Allergies

Caused by meats, dairy, eggs, and other foods. Grains are rarely a cause of allergies.

SIGNS



Rash

Rashes tend to occur on the face, in the ears, between the toes, at the base of the tail, and on the abdomen.



Asthma

Cats may respond to inhaled allergens with coughing and wheezing.



Tears and sneezing

Excessive tearing or sneezing.



Gastrointestinal symptoms

Symptoms can include vomiting, diarrhea, and anal gland problems.



Itching

Allergies can cause a dog or cat to rub, scratch, and lick their skin, leading to more irritation, broken skin, and possible infection.

DIAGNOSIS



Evaluation

Your veterinarian will examine your pet, learn about the signs you've noticed, and study the pet's medical history.



Testing

Your veterinarian may recommend blood or skin testing, which can help determine if your pet is allergic, and if so what your pet is allergic to. These tests are not 100% accurate.



Changing the diet

If your veterinarian suspects your pet may have a food allergy, he or she may recommend a special diet to test whether food is the cause of the problem.

TREATMENT



Avoiding the allergen

If possible, remove the cause of the allergy from the pet's diet or environment.



Steroids

These drugs can be effective in treating allergic disease, but they have a range of side-effects, including weight gain, increased drinking and urination, sleeplessness, and anxiety.



Antihistamines

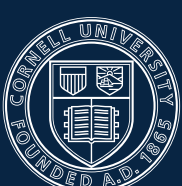
Some antihistamines used in pets are also used in humans. These drugs should only be given to a pet under the guidance of a veterinarian.



Other drugs

Most allergic animals require more than one drug over their lifetime to control their symptoms. There is no single best drug.

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Cornell University
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The Baker Institute for Animal Health is dedicated to carrying out basic research in animal health. Visit our website to learn more about our studies and how you can support our mission. We are a proud part of Cornell University's College of Veterinary Medicine.

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