



Allergic skin disease in dogs & cats

Allergic skin disease is one of the most common - and often most frustrating - conditions seen in companion animals. It's multifactorial, meaning more than one trigger usually contributes to the itch, redness, or recurrent infections. Recognising the different types of allergies helps pet parents treat the cause—not just the itch—and ensures more targeted, lasting relief.

Top 3 causes of allergic skin disease



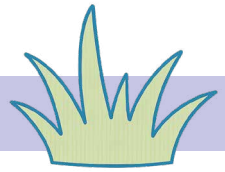
A novel protein fresh food diet formulated by a nutritionist is an option too!



1 FOOD ALLERGIES

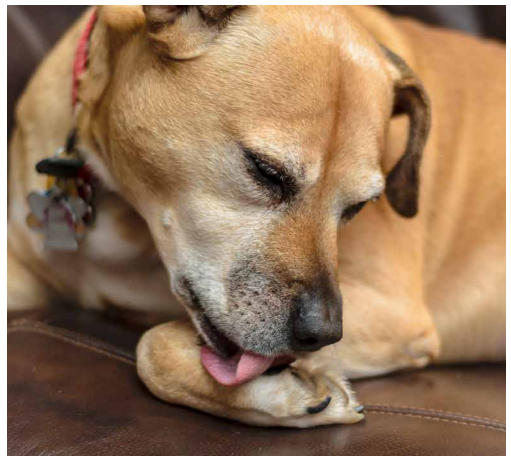
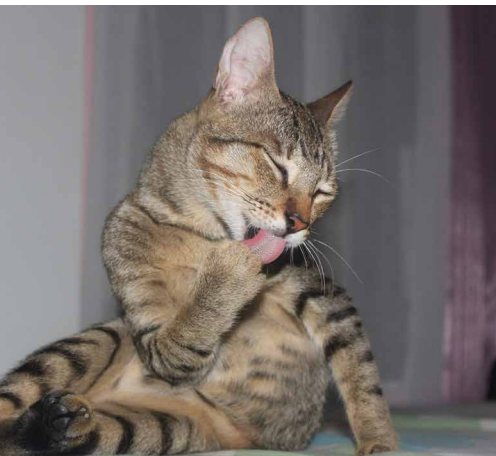
- Usually a reaction to specific dietary proteins (e.g., chicken, beef, dairy, fish).
- Symptoms often include year-round itching, chronic ear or paw infections, and potentially soft stools.
- Gold-standard diagnostic method: a strict elimination diet trial using a novel-protein or hydrolysed diet for 8-12 weeks.
- Blood or saliva allergy tests are not reliable for diagnosing food allergy - skip them!
- Once improved, a “challenge” with the old diet confirms the diagnosis.

2 ENVIRONMENTAL ALLERGIES

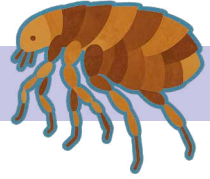


ALLERGIC / ATOPIC DERMATITIS

- Triggered by pollens, dust mites, grasses, moulds, or contact with certain materials.
- Symptoms often worsen seasonally (spring/monsoon) or after outdoor exposure.
- Requires long-term management, not a one-time cure, including:
 - Regular medicated baths (even dogs & cats have skin types!) and anti bacterial sprays
 - Anti-itch/allergy medication when indicated (for some animals this can be lifelong)
 - Supplements — like Omega 3s & Probiotics
 - Address secondary infections early and ideally with topicals! Antibiotic resistance is a very real issue and their use should be minimised
- Environmental control (washing bedding, air filters, routine vacuuming/cleaning) reduces exposure.



3 FLEA ALLERGIC DERMATITIS



FAD

- This is caused by an allergy to flea saliva, not the fleas themselves!
- Even a single bite can trigger intense itching for weeks.
- Year-round flea prevention is critical in India's climate.
- Treat all pets in the household, vacuum frequently, and wash soft furnishings weekly.
- Choose products with proven efficacy that are appropriate for your pets overall wellbeing





WHEN TO CALL YOUR VET

USUALLY IT IS WHEN YOUR PET HAS UNEXPECTED OR UNMANAGEABLE FLARE UPS, WHICH INCLUDE:

- Open sores, bleeding, or self-trauma.
- Bad odour, thickened or darkened skin.
- Head-shaking, red or smelly ears.
- Hair loss or scabs that don't improve within a week of home care.

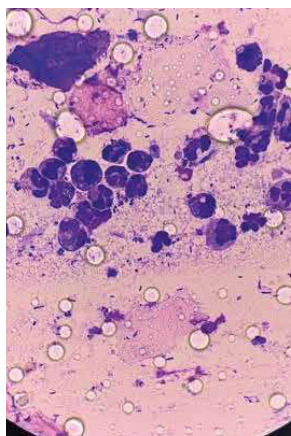


WHAT TO EXPECT AT YOUR VET VISIT

- Physical examination focusing on skin, ears, and paws.
- Skin cytology to identify bacteria, yeast, or inflammatory cells, and scrapings to identify mange.
- Reviewing skin samples under the microscope
- Bacterial and fungal culture testing, if indicated.
- Therapeutic trials for food or environment to isolate the trigger.
- Start an effective Allergy Management Plan.



inflamed ear canal



Cytology under the microscope showing an overgrowth of bacteria and lots of inflammatory cells



HOME CARE

AND LONG-TERM MANAGEMENT

- Use vet-recommended shampoos and topical treatments regularly/as prescribed.
- Maintain a balanced diet; avoid random “hypoallergenic” foods without guidance.
- Effective supplements and gut biome support
- Keep records of flare-ups - season, diet, recent travels, product use - to spot patterns.
- Combine barrier repair + anti-itch therapy for best results.
- Manage your pet’s stress and boredom, which can worsen over-grooming.

Myth vs. Fact

MYTH BUSTING SOME COMMON INACCURACIES



“My pet’s skin problem came from eating too much chicken yesterday.”



“He doesn’t have fleas - I never see any.”



“Antihistamines always solve skin allergies.”



True food allergies develop after long exposure to a protein, not overnight.



Even one flea bite can cause weeks of itching in allergic pets.



Most allergic pets need multimodal management - shampoos, diet, flea control, and sometimes prescription anti-itch therapy. Anti histamines are ineffective for most patients!



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