

AXIOM
ALLERGY VET

"For Allergy Testing In Cat, Dog & Horse"

Could my cat be allergic?

*Pet owner information
from "The Quality Clinical
Pathology Service"*



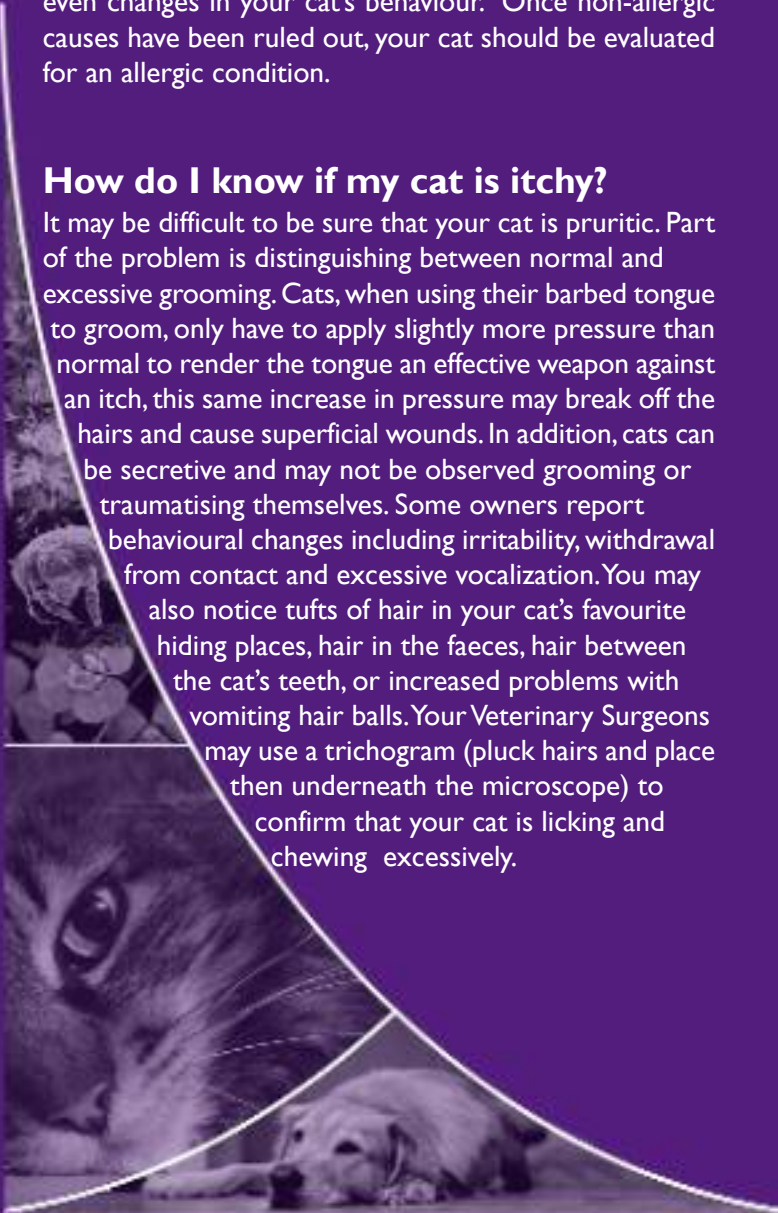
Could my Cat be Allergic?

Yes

As the owner of a cat, you are very aware of changes in your pet's grooming, behaviour, skin and hair coat. These could be signs of an allergy. Your Veterinary Surgeon, together with Axiom Veterinary Laboratories, will work with you to help identify underlying problems that can cause skin disease, loss of hair, itching and scratching, and even changes in your cat's behaviour. Once non-allergic causes have been ruled out, your cat should be evaluated for an allergic condition.

How do I know if my cat is itchy?

It may be difficult to be sure that your cat is pruritic. Part of the problem is distinguishing between normal and excessive grooming. Cats, when using their barbed tongue to groom, only have to apply slightly more pressure than normal to render the tongue an effective weapon against an itch, this same increase in pressure may break off the hairs and cause superficial wounds. In addition, cats can be secretive and may not be observed grooming or traumatising themselves. Some owners report behavioural changes including irritability, withdrawal from contact and excessive vocalization. You may also notice tufts of hair in your cat's favourite hiding places, hair in the faeces, hair between the cat's teeth, or increased problems with vomiting hair balls. Your Veterinary Surgeons may use a trichogram (pluck hairs and place then underneath the microscope) to confirm that your cat is licking and chewing excessively.



What are the other signs of Skin Disease?

The possible presentations associated with underlying skin disorders in cats include.

1. **Hair loss or thinning hair:** Patchy hair loss is common in cats with skin disease. Symmetric hair loss without other skin changes is less common. Clinically, the most common areas of symmetric self-inflicted hair loss are the abdomen and upper thighs, followed by the area over the tail-head region (with possible extension to the tail). In some affected cats, multiple areas of hair loss may become confluent and involve the entire trunk. In most patients, the skin looks completely normal.
2. **Small, reddened crusts or scabs:** The lesions may be in one area or spread over the entire body. The localised form most often affects the neck, shoulder, or tail-head region. This is sometimes referred to as miliary dermatitis.
3. **Raised area of hairless skin:** An eosinophilic plaque is a well-circumscribed, reddish-yellow, ulcerated, and intensely itchy plaque that is usually found on the thigh or abdomen of 2 to 4 year old cats.
4. **Inflamed lesion with a dish-shaped ulcer:** An indolent ulcer is usually found on the upper lip, in the mouth and (rarely) on the skin. The ulcers are not associated with pain.
5. **Itchy head and neck leading to self trauma:** Affected cats scratch at the face, head and neck with increased predilection for the area around the ears and neck. This self-inflicted trauma may be severe.
6. **Generalised itching:** Over time, generalised itching and the resultant scratching results in self-induced patchy hair loss and scabbing or crusting.
7. **Other non-specific signs:** Recurrent ear infections and excessive ear wax and exacerbation of feline acne may occur in association with the skin lesions. Secondary bacterial infection, yeast dermatitis, or seborrhoea (dry, scaly or oily skin and coat) may also be seen.

Additional signs also may be observed in cats with allergies. Sneezing may be seen in up to 50% of allergic cats and conjunctivitis may be present. Chronic coughing and asthma are occasionally associated with respiratory allergies, which may have different causes than skin allergic disease.

What underlying diseases can cause these types of skin problems in my Cat?

There are a number of underlying diseases that may cause the types of dermatological problems described above.

These include:

- Allergy to the saliva that is injected when a flea bites.
- Allergies to something the cat is eating.
- Allergies to environmental substances such as pollens of grasses, weeds and trees: house dust mites and moulds. (This disease is termed atopy)
- Auto-immune dermatosis (disease where the body mounts an immune response directed against the skin)
- Neoplasia (cancer) of the skin.
- Fungal or yeast infection
- Psychogenic dermatoses.
- Hormonal diseases
- Bacterial infection
- Mite infestations.



How is Atopy diagnosed and treated in my Cat?

The presumptive diagnosis of atopy is made after your Veterinary Surgeon has ruled out other causes of dermatitis. Following this, you and your Veterinary Surgeon will have a discussion on medical treatment alternatives for long term control of your cat's atopy. An allergy test should be used to identify the allergens to which your cat is most sensitive.

Axiom Allergyvet™ Detection System has been shown to have a high degree of sensitivity and specificity in identifying allergens to which cats are sensitive. Treatment may involve immunotherapy (allergy injections) which helps your cat to control the allergic response.

What is immunotherapy?

Immunotherapy is a medical treatment where allergens (pollens, moulds, mites) to which your cat is allergic are injected into your cat in increasing amounts and concentrations. By injecting allergens in this fashion, the majority of cats experience changes in their immune system and become less sensitive to these allergens. This is the safest way to control the clinical signs of allergy in your cat. Unlike corticosteroids, immunotherapy actually helps your cat's immune system control the symptoms of allergy.

How are the immunotherapy injections given?

Immunotherapy injections should be administered under the guidance and supervision of a Veterinary Surgeon. Immunotherapy injections are administered with a small needle subcutaneously (beneath the skin). The majority of cats do not object to these injections.



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It is the policy of Axiom Veterinary Laboratories Ltd to provide a range of diagnostic services which are reliable and consistent with the expectation and requirements of its clients.

The company's objective of consistent high quality performance is met by mandatory adherence to protocol, through staff training and the development of personal responsibility for all personnel, together with the provision of adequate resources, according to the principles of Quality Assurance.

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