

**AXIOM**  
ALLERGY VET

*"For Allergy Testing In Cat, Dog & Horse"*

*The scratching  
Dog  
- a possible  
allergy?*

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



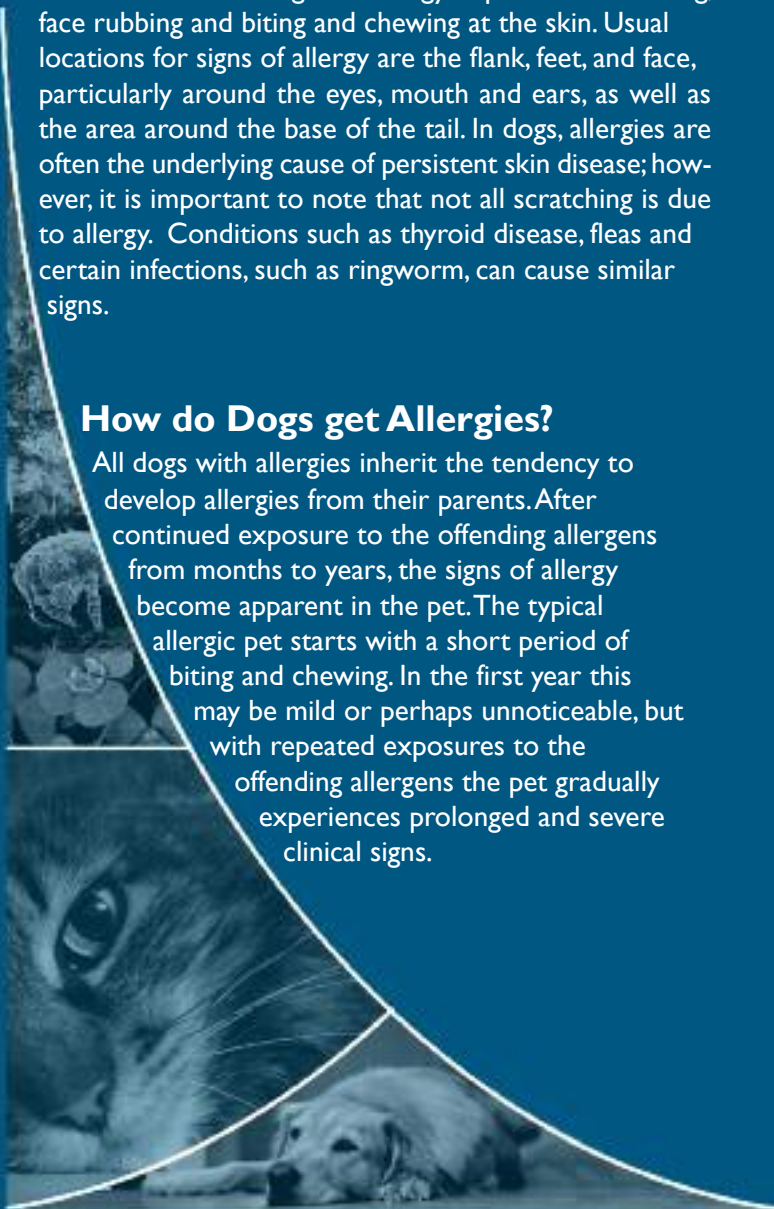
Dog, just like humans, can have allergies. More than 30% of all skin irritations in these animals can be attributed to allergies. You may notice that your pet's symptoms get worse during the spring and summer, simply because of the increased amounts of pollen in the air during those times.

## **What are the signs of Allergies?**

The most common signs of allergy in pets are scratching, face rubbing and biting and chewing at the skin. Usual locations for signs of allergy are the flank, feet, and face, particularly around the eyes, mouth and ears, as well as the area around the base of the tail. In dogs, allergies are often the underlying cause of persistent skin disease; however, it is important to note that not all scratching is due to allergy. Conditions such as thyroid disease, fleas and certain infections, such as ringworm, can cause similar signs.

## **How do Dogs get Allergies?**

All dogs with allergies inherit the tendency to develop allergies from their parents. After continued exposure to the offending allergens from months to years, the signs of allergy become apparent in the pet. The typical allergic pet starts with a short period of biting and chewing. In the first year this may be mild or perhaps unnoticeable, but with repeated exposures to the offending allergens the pet gradually experiences prolonged and severe clinical signs.



## **What are Allergies?**

An allergic reaction is one in which an individual reacts to a normal substance in the environment. These substances are called allergens and include pollens, moulds, animal dander, house dust mites, fleas. Allergens cause reactions through skin contact, inhalation or ingestion. Allergic animals produce excess IgE antibodies to the specific allergens. These antibodies react with skin mast cells and cause biochemical changes in the body which produce the clinical signs of allergy.

## **When are Allergies most likely to occur?**

Allergies occur whenever the offending allergens are present. The more common allergens such as house dust mites or mould spores will produce signs of allergy year round, while allergies from plants that pollinate during warm months cause allergies only when they pollinate. Adverse cutaneous food reaction may occur by itself or it may be a component of an overall allergy problem.

## **How can Allergies be diagnosed?**

Because of the complexity of allergy diagnosis, the combination of patient history, physical examination and clinical signs in the pet are all important in making an accurate diagnosis. After a thorough examination, your veterinary surgeon will decide if allergy testing is indicated for your pet. A small sample of blood may be taken and submitted to Axiom Veterinary Laboratories for diagnostic evaluation using the latest Axiom Allergyvet™ system. Your pet's serum will be tested for sensitivity to allergens such as trees, grasses, weed, shrubs, pollens, fungi and house dust mites.

## **Can Allergies be prevented?**

Since allergies are inherited, there is no absolute way to prevent them. It is therefore generally accepted that allergies can be controlled but not prevented. The best control is achieved through avoidance of the offending allergens, so if, for example, your pet is allergic to fleas, it is better to prevent flea infestation. However, allergens like moulds and house dust mites are virtually impossible to avoid, resulting in the need for alternative allergy treatments.

## How are Allergies treated?

The best form of treatment is avoidance of the offending allergens.

In most cases, however, this is not possible. Steroid drugs are often used for short term relief of symptoms, but prolonged use of steroids can have serious side effects. Antihistamines, essential fatty acids, shampoos etc, are other alternative medicines useful for reducing clinical symptoms.

Immunotherapy is another alternative. With immunotherapy, treatment sets are formulated for your pet based on its allergy test results. The treatment (injection) is given in increasing concentrations. This builds the tolerance of the animal to the offending allergens so it can live more comfortably in its environment. Your Veterinary Surgeon will discuss various alternative treatments with you based on the needs of your pet.



## How successful is treatment?

The success of treatment depends on several factors including the overall health of your pet, the severity of the allergies, breed, age, duration of clinical signs and the owner's commitment to therapy. In general, the steps to successful allergy treatment involve the following:-

1. Trying to avoid or reduce the allergens in the environment.
2. Giving recommended medications to control clinical signs.
3. Identifying the specific allergens causing clinical signs in your pet, followed by allergy immunotherapy.

Some allergies dissipate with time and treatment. In other cases animals may require continued immunotherapy to maintain tolerance to the allergens in question. With adherence to the treatment schedule, one can expect an excellent chance of reduction in clinical signs or reduced dependence on steroids or other drugs. Improvement in most cases is seen after 3-5 months of treatment. A survey by Axiom showed up to an 85% beneficial response to immunotherapy.

The combination of immunotherapy and drug therapies will result in successful allergy control in the majority of pets.



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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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