

ALLERGIES



Dear Friends:

While the allergy season for pets may be similar to the allergy season for people, the symptoms your pet experiences are quite different. People with allergies often sneeze, have a runny nose and itchy eyes. Pets, on the other hand, commonly manifest their allergy symptoms through their skin. Common areas affected by allergies include: face, ears, axillae (arm pits) and abdomen. Symptoms associated with allergies include itching, redness, and hair loss.



These same symptoms can also be caused by:

1. **External parasites: Fleas, mites (e.g.: scabies and Demodex) and lice**
2. **Ringworm (more common with cats)**
3. **Bacterial and yeast infections: while commonly associated with any cause of itching, these infections intensify the degree of itchiness**

Common types of allergies your pet may be experiencing:



1. **Fleas:** Fleas are the most common cause of allergies. Flea control is imperative for all pets, but particularly in allergic pets
2. **Food:** Common culprits: beef, chicken, pork, dairy, fish (cats), corn, wheat and soy.
3. **Atopy¹:** Atopy describes a heritable disorder caused by an over-reactive immune system responding to normal, nontoxic substances (e.g.: pollens) in your pet's environment. Some breeds are predisposed: Golden Retrievers, Terriers, Dalmatians, Bull Dogs. Dogs with allergies should not be bred to prevent transmission of this frustrating disease. Testing for your pet's specific allergies helps tailor a specific program for your pet and offers the best results. Options for testing include:
 - a. Blood allergy testing.
 - b. Intradermal skin testing: most specific test for your pet's allergies.



While there is no cure for allergies, your pet's symptoms can be relieved with a combination of therapies to treat for infections, parasites and itching. Patients that undergo allergy testing will begin "allergy shots" to help control symptoms. The goal of any allergy therapy is to control the itching and limit skin and ear infections. Your veterinarian will discuss with you the best strategy to offer relief for your pet's allergies.

Your friends at,
Elizabethtown Veterinary Hospital