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Allergies In Pets, Scratching The Surface



The Humane Society of America estimates that over 60% of American homes have pets. Dogs and cats remain the most common pets in America, accounting for more than 90% of the total number of pets in the country.

This trend is quite encouraging as it means humans are showing love to other species more than ever. But what happens when a favorite pet becomes sick or suddenly

changes behavior? It is only normal the pet owner seeks a solution as quickly as possible. Allergies are one of the most common ailments in pets.



What is an allergy?

An allergy is an immune response to a substance that the affected individual has become hypersensitive to. Such substance is considered foreign by the individual's immune system even though it may pose no harm to others. As much as humans are affected by allergies, pets are also affected. Pets equally react to substances such as pollen, foods, chemicals etc. Many pet owners may find it difficult to detect allergies in their pets because the presentation of an allergy in pets may differ from the presentation in humans. For example, an allergy to grass pollen may cause rhinitis in humans while it causes itchy feet in dogs.

Symptoms of pet allergies

The symptoms of pet allergies vary greatly with the type of allergy. However, if you notice persistent or unusual scratching in your pets, you should suspect an allergy. The persistent scratching may lead to open sores, loss of hair and exposure of the skin to opportunistic infections. Pet allergies may also present with symptoms similar to allergic rhinitis in humans. That is, your pet may sneeze frequently or have watery eyes.

Sources of pet allergens

Your pet may be allergic to different substances. Commonly, pets come into contact with these allergens in the environment. The exposure could be via contact or inhalation. Examples of such allergens include pollen, dust mites, mold etc. Pets may also be allergic to the chemicals present in household items such as plastics, carpet fibers or rugs. Other common sources of allergens in pets are flea-bites and foods.

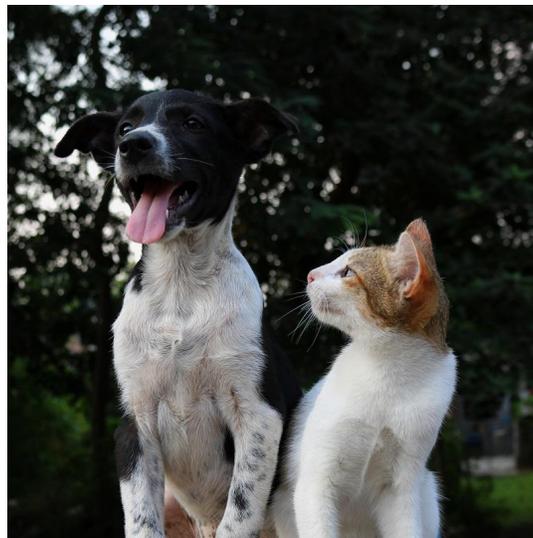
Types of allergens and specific symptoms

Flea allergy dermatitis

This is the most common skin condition in pets, it is believed to be caused by the saliva from fleas. As long you can protect your pet from flea bites, she should be safe from this allergy.

Below are some of the symptoms of flea allergic dermatitis:

- Severe itching and scratching
- Hair loss
- Scabs and lesions on the body



Atopy

This is the type of allergic reaction that arises when the pet comes in contact with or inhales substances in the environment. It is the most common allergic reaction in pets. It is usually seasonal in nature. The seasonality can be used to recognize what the pet is allergic to.

- Recurrent ear infections
- Persistent chewing at the feet
- Licking of the groin area
- Difficulty in breathing (more common in cats)
- Face rubbing (more common in dogs)

Food allergies

Just like humans, pets may also be allergic to certain substances in foods. You should try to correlate the presentation of the allergy with the ingestion of a certain kind of food. If you are able to identify the specific ingredient responsible, your pet should be fine and free from the allergies. If your pet has multiple food allergies, you might need to have a strict diet plan for her.

Below are some symptoms of food allergies:

- Recurrent skin infections
- Itching
- Recurrent ear infections
- Diarrhea

Contact dermatitis

This allergy occurs as a result of contact with chemicals present in plastic, carpet fiber, cleaners etc. it is the least common allergy in pets.

The symptoms include:

- Intense and persistent scratching
- Blisters on the exposed areas
- Loss of hair in the affected region

Allergies may make your pets quite uncomfortable and irritable. Do not hesitate to contact Adobe Animal Hospital if you notice any of the symptoms mentioned in the post or any unusual behavior in your pets. Even if some allergies may not be curable, allergies are quite manageable with the proper care!

Please make an appointment to discuss your pet's health:



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