



Allergic Dermatitis (Atopy or possible Food Allergy)

What next?

What control measures can I take to help?

Can I avoid drugs which might have unwanted side effects?

Our pets are exposed to extremely high levels of allergens both outdoors and in our centrally heated, double glazed houses. Pets often build up a static charge on their fur which attracts high volumes of these allergens which then get absorbed across the skin (which is abnormally “leaky” in allergic pets). House Dust Mite allergy affects more than 90%, or often in combination with it's cousin, the Storage Mite, which can thrive in all dried foods (including human breakfast cereals!!) stored at room temperature.

Successful control depends on a combination of strategies. We will advise which is most appropriate for your dog. Atopy is genetic – we can't cure it yet!

The Strategy

- **Confirm allergy** (constellation of clinical signs, clinical examination/s, biopsy of skin, skin scrapes/cytology, blood allergy testing, skin allergy test)
- **Determine if food allergy likely – factors the vet uses**
 - Age of onset of itch <1yr old = food more likely
 - Defaecation >3 times daily = food more likely
 - Intermittent GI signs = food more likely
 - Known GI upsets to certain proteins = food more likely
 - No response to steroid = food more likely
 - Distribution of lesions/itch – complicated!!
- **Consider a rigorous Food trial if above suggestive:** special hypoallergenic diet +/- wet/dry or feeding from a freezer/fridge to control Storage Mites – *especially important if signs present <12mths of age, or in certain “at risk” breeds eg. Bichon, Wheaten terrier, Golden retriever.*



- **If Food Allergy is not a high probability Consider using **Skin Care** diet**



- Fantastic dermal care nutrition
- Massively anti-inflammatory
- Tyrosine for glossy well-pigmented coat
- Allergy skin barrier repair
- Prevent tartar build up and GI problems

- **Adding in VetenoX is very useful – superb purified fish oil – as advertised by Rory Best for people (Paradox = human form)**



- **Identify and control any secondary infections** in the skin (bacterial/yeast) eg Medicated shampoo (Malaseb, Paxcutol or Allermyl), antibiotics, antifungals
- **Control/remove excess grease and/or moisturise over-dry skin** (eg. Humilac).



- **Identify, remove and protect against “Flare Factors”**
Routine flea control with Frontline Combo every 2 mths (or monthly Nexgard for high risk patients).



- **Reduce burden of House dust mite exposure** eg. Indorex house flea spray, keep house as dry as possible (vent shower/cooking/tumble drier, avoid drying clothes on radiators), exclude allergic pets from room when vacuuming and for 3 hours afterwards (or a HEPA filtered Hoover), boil wash (60 C) pet bed weekly (consider having 2 beds eg. Pet crate beds, or a cotton sheet cover for bed: “1 on, 1 in the wash”).

- **Repair the “leaky skin” and sooth irritation:** Allermyl shampoo 2-4 times weekly to begin, reducing to at least weekly (10 min contact).



“Skin Care Diet too!!!”

- **Reduce skin contact with allergens** (Allermyl shampoo to wash off the allergen. Rinse feet after returning from walks/garden if grass allergy. Watch pollen counts (TV/internet) and use extra symptom control when counts high.

Symptom relief

Often best achieved by a combination of some/all of the following

• Skin Care diet

- Antihistamines eg cetirizine, piriton, combination of both arguably best

- **Anti-inflammatory oils in food “Veternox”**

- Cortavance steroid spray (totally safe – not detectable in the blood)

- Corticosteroids (creams or injections or tablets)

- Apoquel – the “Holy Grail” of therapy?

- Cyclosporin (**Atopica**) – often the ideal drug!

- Shampooing (Allermyl)



Hyposensitising vaccines (help 70% of dogs get a 70% improvement in itch)

Allergies cannot be cured, but with a careful planned approach most patients can be kept very comfortable, with minimal or no side effects.

