

Hurricane Animal Hospital
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Allergy Therapies

1. **Cortisone** (Deop Medrol, Dexamethasone, Vetalog, Prednisone)--These work great but have side effects and we should avoid using them more than three times a year in dogs(cats have almost no problems with cortisone). We use it only when necessary and at the lowest dose possible.

2. **Antihistamines** (Benadryl, Tavist, Chlorpheniramine, Hydroxyzine)--This group has minimal side effects and should be tried in every allergy patient. They need to be given everyday to PREVENT the onset of allergies. Sadly, only 35% of dogs will respond and cats can have adverse reactions. If they help, we can avoid cortisone usage.

3. **Shampoos and Conditioners** (Many options)--I prefer oatmeal/aloe and hydrocortisone products. They should be used on all cases. Unfortunately, they will only provide 24 hours of relief. Conditioners may last longer. Do not bathe more than once a week. If pet responds to antihistamines, try antihistamine shampoo.

4. **Essential Fatty Acids**--They come in many forms (3V, EFA caps, given oral or on food). These products change the inflammatory pathways to a less reactive one and help moisturize the skin.

5. **Allergy Testing**--Can be done in two ways. We can "skin prick" like they do with humans or we can draw a sample of blood and send it to a lab to analyze. Once the testing is done we try and eliminate those allergens from the pets environment and initiate a hyposensitization injection protocol. This is the most expensive step of therapy initially(\$150-250) but in the long run it will save you money, save your pet, and avoid cortisone. 75% of pets will respond to therapy in an average of 1 year.

6. **Flea Elimination**--Fleas are a major source of the allergens your pet is reacting to. They are probably not the only allergen. Flea removal is important for the comfort of all pets regardless of allergies. The flea must be killed before the flea bites your pet. Frontline and Advantage are the best two products to put on your pet to protect your pet against the flea saliva(the stuff that causes the allergy). I also recommend using Siphotrol Plus spray by Vetkem in the house and Advanced

Care by Bayer in your yard.

7. **Diet Trials**--In order to determine if your pet is allergic to its diet, we may need to prescribe a hypoallergenic diet for three months. If more convenient, we can also use a small blood sample to test for food allergies although elimination trials are better and cheaper. Many pets have responded to this step alone. I recommend the following products in order of effectiveness: Z/D ultra, Hills Science Diet Sensitive Skin, Purina HA, Purina LA, IVD's limited antigen food.

8. **Topical sprays/ointments**-- may be needed for inflamed ears, feet, hotspots etc. in addition to the above therapies or on their own. (ex. Gentocin spray for hotspots).

9. **Cyclosporine** -- It is a very expensive medication used to control the immune systems overreaction that occurs during allergy attacks. It is given orally and is used in place of cortisone. 50% of dogs will respond but it will take 4-8 weeks to see that response.

Our staff is willing to answer all your questions about allergy therapy and assist you in choosing appropriate steps and products for your pet.

Dr. Shawn Sette