

IS YOUR PET ALLERGIC?

What you should know about **ANIMAL ALLERGIES** and **IMMUNOTHERAPY**.

Animals have allergies, too.

You're probably familiar with the symptoms of human allergies that include sneezing, wheezing, runny nose and watery eyes. What you may not know is that your pet can suffer the same discomfort in different ways, most commonly an incessant itching, skin irritation or secondary ear infection caused by a specific allergen.

Allergens are substances that trigger an inappropriate response from your pet's immune system. An estimated 1 out of 5 domestic animals, such as dogs, cats and horses, suffer from some kind of allergy.

Three kinds of allergies regularly occur in animals.

Atopy Allergies are associated with environmental pollens, molds, house dust and other common airborne substances. Atopy's first signs usually are skin irritations, which, coupled with excessive scratching, often lead to more complicated infections.

Flea Allergic Dermatitis is a common form of animal allergy in which one flea bite can cause itching in an allergic animal for up to three weeks.

Food Allergies can show themselves in skin irritations, but may also be expressed by vomiting and diarrhea.

Signs that may indicate your pet has allergies:

- Scratching
- Face rubbing
- Hair loss
- Ear infections
- Biting and chewing at the skin
- Recurring skin infections

Ask your veterinarian if your pet is allergic

If your pet exhibits signs of allergies, talk to your veterinarian about testing and treatment options. Your veterinarian can test for allergies with a simple blood draw or skin test.

If it's allergy, there are ways to alleviate your pet's peeve.

If tests confirm your animal is suffering from allergies, you have three options:

- **Immunotherapy** is a safe, long-term treatment that builds your pet's immunity to allergens through injections with increasingly larger doses of a serum specifically formulated to your pet's sensitivities. This option is effective for treating atopy but not recommended for flea and food allergies.

- *Avoidance* of all environmental allergens is virtually impossible. However, avoidance can decrease exposure and may lessen your animal's symptoms. This option is most effective for flea and food allergies but impractical for atopy.
- *Symptomatic treatment* addresses animal's symptoms using steroids, antihistamines or fatty acids but does nothing to stop the progression of allergies.

**Your veterinarian will help you
decide which treatment option
is most appropriate for your pet.**