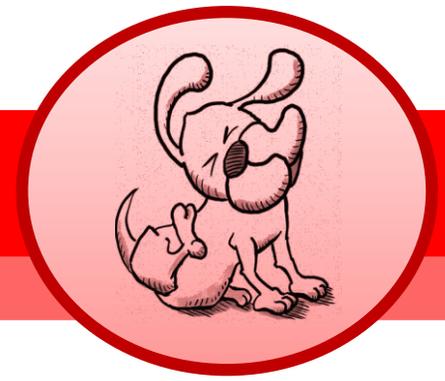


Atopy

Canine Atopic Dermatitis



Otherwise known as Canine Atopic Dermatitis, it is the second most common cause of chronic itching in dogs. It is second only to fleas!

What is Atopy?

Atopy is caused by a disorder of your dog's immune system, causing him/her to be allergic to substances in the environment either inhaled or absorbed by the skin. These substances, "allergens", cause your pet's immune system to react and release histamines.

Common environmental allergens in your pet may include dust mites, mold spores, and pollen.

Symptoms of Atopy

Symptoms of atopy include excessive itching, chewing and licking at the paws, face, groin, belly, armpits, and ears. Most atopy cases develop between the ages of 3 and 6 years of age. As a result of the excessive licking and chewing, sores and hair loss may develop resulting in secondary infections, usually caused by either yeast or bacteria. The areas which are licked most, may develop a red colour to them, which is saliva staining.

More common in specific breeds?

There may be a heritable component to atopy, therefore atopic dogs should not be used for breeding. Breeds which are predisposed to atopy include German Shepherd, West Highland Terrier, Golden Retriever, Dalmatian, Shi-tzu, Miniature Schnauzer, Poodle, Boxer, Lhasa apso, English bulldogs, English setters, Wirehaired fox terriers, Beagle, Boston Terrier and Shar Pei.

Is there a treatment for Atopy?

There is currently no cure for atopy, only treatments which can alleviate symptoms. Such treatments include corticosteroids such as Dexamethasone, Prednisone or Vanectyl-P. These medications are used to help alleviate the inflammation and itch associated with the histamine release, therefore helping to prevent self-trauma and secondary infection. Anti-histamines may also be used in more mild cases. Frequent baths with aloe and oatmeal shampoos are recommended to rinse your dog's body of any provoking allergens. Omega 3 fatty acids have been shown to strengthen your dog's skin barrier, lessening the impact of some environmental allergens, and preventing secondary infections from developing. Lastly, Atopica (cyclosporine) is an immunosuppressive drug that is used in the treatment of atopy.

Allergy injections are also used in the treatment of atopy. Desensitization vaccines are usually prescribed by a dermatologist after a series of allergy tests are performed on your pet. These injections are administered to your dog over time, to help his/her immune system become desensitized to the offending allergens.

Please talk to us about how we can help alleviate your dog's atopy symptoms.