

Allergies in Dogs

Many dogs suffer from allergies, and sadly this is not something that we can usually cure; most need lifelong management. We can run blood tests to try and find out what your dog is allergic to, but we often find these are inconclusive, or come back with something very vague such as a grass allergy, which is often hard to avoid. Allergy testing is more useful for food-based allergies. Please do ask if you would like to look into blood testing for allergies though, as it can find specific causes that may be eliminated from the diet or environment, therefore controlling symptoms.

If we cannot find or avoid the trigger, your dog may need medicine (tablets or injections) for some or all of the year to control their allergy. There are, however, a lot of things you can do to improve the skin barrier and minimise the frequency and severity of flare-ups.

We recommend the following for all dogs with skin issues and allergies:

1. Avoid long grasses during the summer season. Walking on short grass, concrete, beaches or the woods are less likely to trigger allergies
2. Wipe your dog with a damp cloth after every walk during spring/summer, paying particular attention to feet, belly, armpits and ears. This removes pollen attached to the fur.
3. Avoid plug in air-fresheners - many dogs develop allergies to the aerosolised chemicals
4. Use a non-biological powder to wash their bedding
5. Use a soothing shampoo that helps the skin barrier, such as [Douxo S3 Calm](#) (available from e.g Amazon). Avoid strong smelling shampoos and products in general
6. Use a product such as [Douxo S3 Calm mousse](#) in between bathing, to support and soothe the skin
7. Add an [Omega 3&6](#) supplement to your pet's diet. This has a huge impact on skin health. Many brands are available from pet shops or online
8. Keep up to date with flea control, as one insect bite can often trigger a severe reaction in dogs with skin problems
9. Consider a dietary trial. This involves feeding ONE FOOD ONLY for 4-6 weeks to see if the allergies resolve. It is very important that during this trial period no other food or treats are fed at all, as this will impact the trial. You can either use a novel protein that your dog has never eaten before e.g venison (care with insect-based protein as most dogs will have eaten insects in their life, you just won't have seen it!). I prefer to use a special hydrolysed diet such as [Purina HA Hypoallergenic](#) which is available from most large pet shops and online. This food is formulated so the molecules are too small to create a reaction.

Following the above steps will improve your dog's skin, reduce itching and improve their quality of life. However, please do contact Tribe Vets if you would like any extra help or advice about managing your pet's skin disease or allergies.