

## Dog Needs Prednisone for Tough Grass Allergy

**For some dogs, nothing else truly works.**

Q. My American Pit Bull Terrier has a contact allergy to grass. We have done every OTC and prescription medication that we can afford. Currently he is taking hydroxyzine, and his feet are wiped three times a day with medically formulated wipes. He starts to get better, then gets really bad again, and he licks his feet all day and night. He likes the ocean and lakes. The allergy stops when we vacation in such places. What can we do?

A. Although skin allergies in dogs can be controlled with a combination of antihistamines, fatty acid caps, diet, prescription shampoo, and nutraceuticals, sometimes they are not enough.

The “big gun” for controlling allergies, or other conditions that cause itchiness, is prednisone. Although steroids like prednisone can have serious side effects when used long term, they are very helpful to help getting certain allergic conditions under control.

One strategy is to use prednisone for three weeks every three to four months. It is important that your veterinarian prescribe a tapering dose, so that your dog's body does not have difficulty adjusting to the sudden discontinuation of the drug. Used this way, prednisone can be very helpful in giving dogs comfort and relief from severely itchy conditions.

On the other hand, going on vacation fulltime to the seashore or lakefront sounds like a good solution as well.