

Heal Your Allergic Dog the Natural Way

Six tips to a happier, healthier, itch-free dog.

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Allergic skin disease is the most common dermatology problem seen in dogs. Typically, the dog's skin appears fairly normal despite a large amount of itching. If a secondary bacterial or yeast infection is present, the skin might show signs of scabs, small red bumps (called papules), small pimples (called pustules), crusting, greasiness or a foul odor.

Conventional treatment for pets with allergies involves administering potent medications, such as prednisone or cyclosporine. Antibiotics and antifungal drugs are often used when secondary infections occur. Because these drugs only produce temporary relief from the itching and infection, an integrative approach to heal the dog is preferred.

The following tips can help start your allergic dog on the road to healing.

1. Frequent bathing is probably the most important thing you can do. The more frequently a dog is bathed, the less itchy he will be. Use natural shampoos designed for frequent bathing.
2. Feed a natural diet that is free of byproducts and chemicals.
3. Minimize vaccines by using antibody titer testing. Never vaccinate a pet when it's itchy. Over-use of vaccines can worsen a pet's allergies.
4. Antioxidants are extremely helpful in reducing inflammation.
5. Fish oil acts like a natural steroid, reducing inflammatory byproducts that can result from cell damage. Ask your veterinarian to recommend a balanced fatty-acid product.
6. Finally, the immune-boosting supplement Vim & Vigor, manufactured by Pet Together is one of the most important supplements you can use to help heal allergic pets.

Following these tips will get you started on a great drug-free program to make your pet comfortable and begin the healing process.

Want to read more about natural and holistic healthcare? Check out the Natural Health Solutions column by Shawn Messonnier, DVM, in every issue of Dog World magazine.