

# TO YOUR

# Pet's

# Health

## ALLERGY Angst

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Ahhh.....spring! The grass is green, flowers are blooming, trees are budding and turning green, bees are buzzing, the air is fresh. ACHOO!! Darn it, there go my allergies again! I love springtime, my allergies not so much. Did you know that your pets can suffer from allergies as well?

Have you noticed your pet constantly scratching his ears or sides, constantly licking and chewing at his feet and legs, or along his back? How about that constant ear infection? It seems to clear up with treatment, but then comes back again a few weeks after the treatment is done. These may be signs of allergies.

Sometimes these symptoms are seasonal and only happen at certain times of the year. In other cases, they are all year round. Like us, pets can suffer from seasonal allergies caused by environmental allergens seen with the pollinating of trees, grasses and plants. They can also have allergies to flea bites, molds, dust mites and certain foods. Often, allergies to this latter group can be seen all year round. Paying attention to when the symptoms start and how long they last will help decide if they are seasonal or a more chronic issue.

There are certainly other diseases that can cause similar symptoms. It is always important to get the opinion of your veterinarian on what may specifically be going on, what diagnostics need to be done,

and what treatments need to be pursued. Also, it is rare for a pet less than a year old to suffer from allergies, as it takes exposure and then time for the immune system to have a reaction to an allergen.

If your pet is suffering from allergies, treatments may start with trying to decide what the pet is allergic to and avoidance of the allergens if possible. This can include suggestions like footbaths when the pet comes in from outdoors to help decrease the amount of contact your pet has with environmental allergens. Oral antihistamines may be suggested in milder cases or when the pet has the initial symptoms. However, sometimes the itch cycle has become so bad that your pet has created sores or infection in the skin from scratching, licking and/or chewing. Often this may require steroids and antibiotic to get the cycle broken and the sores to heal.

If the symptoms are chronic and do not seem to be responding to avoidance and antihistamines, there are other medications on the market that may help. These medications will need to be prescribed by your veterinarian.

So the next time your pet is itching, chewing or licking more than normal, try to take note. If it is occurring for prolonged periods of time, or you are noticing sores starting to form, visit with your veterinarian for advice. Your pet may be suffering from allergies.



## Blue River

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