

Allergies are quite common in dogs of all breeds and backgrounds and need to be addressed. Ignoring such condition is discomforting and sometimes painful to our four-legged friends.

For a dog the most common symptom associated with allergies is itching of the skin, either localized (in one area) or generalized (all over the body). In some cases, the symptoms involve the respiratory system, with coughing, sneezing, and/or wheezing. Sometimes, there may be runny discharge from eyes or nose, hair loss, ear and skin infections. In other cases, the allergic symptoms affect the digestive system resulting in vomiting and diarrhea.

**You should not wait to see a vet until your dog is miserable, because to get him back to comfort, it will cost you more money and take longer to see a resolution.**



There are three types of allergies (your dog can have one of the following or a combination).

1. **Food allergy** is most commonly developed in response to protein of the food of a particular food origin. Dairy products, beef, wheat gluten, chicken, chicken eggs, lamb, and soy are commonly associated with food allergies in dogs.
  - Treatment requires identifying the offending component(s) of the diet and eliminating them. One simple way is purchasing a grain free, single meat diet. Single meat should be a non-common protein such as rabbit, venison, bison, and turkey. Stay away from common protein such as chicken, beef and fish. This includes fish oil tabs you may be given your dog for additional oils.
  - Identifying root cause: changing a diet needs time to determine results. Because it takes at least eight weeks for all other food products to be eliminated from the body, the dog must eat the special diet exclusively for eight weeks.
    - this includes removing all treats and digestible chew toys
2. **Environmental allergies** can be outdoor allergens like ragweed, grasses and pollens, as well as indoor irritants like mold, dust mites, cleaning chemicals and even fabrics like wool or cotton.
  - As a general rule, if your dog is allergic to something inside your home, he'll have year-round symptoms. If he's reacting to something outdoors, it could very well be a seasonal problem.

Dogs with environmental allergies should be wiped down every night with a cool wash cloth and bathed every week to two weeks. *Remember that allergens stick to the dog's coat until wiped off.*

- Indoor: Simple ways to identify root cause is first give your dog a bath with an oatmeal shampoo and wash (minus fabric sheets) all their bedding including collar/harness, clothing and toys.
  - Change bedding from cotton to fleece

- Remove air fresheners from the home including powder that may be laid on the carpet before vacuuming
- Remove conditioners and perfumes used on the dog
- Outdoor: Simple ways to identify root cause is first give your dog a bath with an oatmeal shampoo and wash (minus fabric sheets) all their bedding including collar/harness, clothing and toys.
  - It is critical to bathe your dog weekly and wipe him down with a cool wash daily as allergens will continue to snowball until the next bath.
  - Give your dog an antihistamine. Over-the-counter can include Benedryl or Zyrtec (consult with your vet on dosages); however, they will not work in all cases. A step-up is a prescription from your vet that can include apoquel or even predisone.

3. **Flea allergy dermatitis** is actually sensitivity to flea saliva. It's not the bite of the flea that causes most of the itching in dogs; it's the saliva. This does not mean your dog has fleas in order to have flea dermatitis.

- Treatment: A soothing bath will kill any fleas on your dog if they exist, help heal skin irritation, and make her feel more comfortable and less itchy.
  - Keeping the dog on flea preventative and making sure his environment is flea free