

Allergies in Dogs



Understanding Allergies in Dogs

Allergies are one of the most common reasons dogs visit the vet. Just like people, dogs can react to substances in their environment, food, or parasites. These reactions often appear as itchy skin, ear infections, or digestive issues.



Types of Allergies

1. **Environmental (Atopy):**

Triggered by pollen, mold, dust mites, or grasses. Symptoms often worsen seasonally.

- Signs: Itchy skin (especially paws, face, belly), ear infections, licking or chewing.
- Management: Regular baths, anti-itch medications, allergy testing, and immunotherapy.

2. **Food Allergies:**

Caused by an immune response to a specific protein (like beef, chicken, or dairy).

- Signs: Chronic ear infections, skin infections, and sometimes digestive upset.
- Diagnosis: A strict prescription elimination diet for 8–12 weeks.
- Treatment: Avoiding the identified ingredient.

3. **Flea Allergy Dermatitis (FAD):**

Even one flea bite can trigger an allergic reaction in sensitive dogs.

- Signs: Itchy back or tail base, hair loss, redness, scabs.
- Treatment: Year-round flea prevention and environmental control.

4. **Contact Allergies:**

Less common, caused by direct contact with certain materials (like shampoos, plants, or cleaners).

- Signs: Redness or rash in localized areas.
- Treatment: Avoidance and gentle medicated shampoos.



Common Symptoms

- Persistent itching, licking, or chewing
- Red, irritated skin
- Ear infections or shaking the head
- Hair loss or scabs
- Recurrent skin infections
- Sneezing or watery eyes (less common)



Diagnosis and Treatment

At Pleasant Valley Pet Clinic, our team will:

- Perform a thorough exam and review your dog's history
- Rule out fleas and infections
- Recommend diagnostic tests such as skin scrapings, food trials, or allergy testing
- Develop a tailored treatment plan that may include:
 - Prescription allergy medications or injections
 - Specialized diets

- *Topical treatments and medicated shampoos*
- *Long-term allergy management programs*



When to See Your Veterinarian

If your dog is scratching, losing fur, or has red, inflamed skin, it's best to schedule an appointment. Allergies can worsen over time if untreated, but with proper care, most dogs live comfortably and itch-free.

👉 **Bottom line:** *Allergies are common in dogs and can cause real discomfort. With proper diagnosis and management, most dogs can live comfortable, happy lives.*

We take a comprehensive approach to allergy care—focusing on identifying the cause, relieving symptoms, and keeping your pet comfortable year-round.