

Allergies in Cats

Just like people, cats can develop allergies that cause discomfort and ongoing health issues. Allergies happen when the immune system overreacts to everyday substances such as pollen, food, or flea bites.



Common Signs of Allergies in Cats

- Itchy skin (scratching, biting, or overgrooming)
- Hair loss or scabs
- Red or irritated skin
- Frequent ear infections or head shaking
- Coughing, sneezing, or watery eyes
- Vomiting or diarrhea (with food allergies)



Types of Allergies

1. Flea Allergy Dermatitis (FAD)

The most common allergy in cats. Even one flea bite can trigger intense itching and skin irritation.

Prevention is key: year-round flea control is essential.

2. Food Allergies

Cats can be allergic to certain ingredients, most often proteins like chicken, beef, or fish. Symptoms usually include skin problems or digestive upset.

Diagnosis requires a special diet trial under veterinary guidance.

3. Environmental/Atopic Allergies

Caused by pollens, mold, dust mites, or other environmental factors. These often show as chronic skin or ear issues and may flare up seasonally.

4. Contact Allergies (less common)

Caused by direct skin contact with things like certain cleaning products, shampoos, or fabrics.



How Allergies Are Diagnosed

- Medical history and physical exam
- Skin checks and parasite control
- Food elimination trials
- Allergy testing (blood tests or intradermal testing for environmental triggers)



Treatment Options

- **Flea prevention:** year-round, veterinarian-recommended products
- **Diet changes:** prescription or limited-ingredient diets
- **Medications:** antihistamines, anti-itch medications, steroids, or immune-modulating drugs
- **Special therapies:** allergy shots (immunotherapy) for long-term management

- **Supportive care:** regular bathing with gentle shampoos, supplements for skin health



What Cat Owners Can Do

- *Keep your cat on consistent flea prevention*
- *Follow your vet's diet trial instructions closely (no treats, no table scraps)*
- *Monitor for seasonal flare-ups and keep track of symptoms*
- *Schedule regular check-ups to adjust treatment as needed*

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