

ALLERGIC SKIN DISEASE IN DOGS

Understanding Itching, Skin Irritation & Allergies

Allergic Skin Disease is one of the most common causes of itching, overgrooming, and skin problems in dogs. Allergies can develop at any age and may be caused by fleas, food ingredients, or environmental allergens.

Early diagnosis and long-term management can greatly improve your dog's comfort and quality of life.

FLEA ALLERGY
IS THE MOST
COMMON ALLERGIC
SKIN CONDITION
IN DOGS.



WHAT IS ALLERGIC SKIN DISEASE?

Allergic Skin Disease occurs when a dog's immune system overreacts to substances that are normally harmless.

Common causes include:

- 🐾 Flea Allergy Dermatitis (FAD)
- 🐾 Food allergies
- 🐾 Environmental allergies (Atopy)
- 🐾 Contact allergies (less common)

Allergies often cause chronic itching and skin inflammation.

DID YOU KNOW?

- 🐾 Dogs with allergies often overgroom instead of scratching.
- 🐾 Excessive licking can lead to hot spots, skin thickening, and secondary infections.
- 🐾 Even a single flea bite can trigger severe itching in sensitive dogs.

1 RECOGNISE THE SIGNS

Common signs include:

- 🐾 Excessive scratching
- 🐾 Hair loss or bald patches
- 🐾 Itching and restlessness
- 🐾 Red or inflamed skin
- 🐾 Scabs, especially around the head and neck
- 🐾 Recurrent ear irritation
- 🐾 Skin infections
- 🐾 Changes in behaviour due to discomfort

⚠️ Many allergic pets show hair loss before obvious scratching.



2 WHAT CAUSES ALLERGIES?

The most common allergy triggers are:



FLEA ALLERGY

- 🐾 Flea saliva triggers an allergic reaction.
- 🐾 Often affects the lower back and tail area.



FOOD ALLERGY

- 🐾 Usually related to certain proteins (e.g. beef, chicken, dairy).



ENVIRONMENTAL ALLERGY

- 🐾 Pollens
- 🐾 Dust mites
- 🐾 Mould spores
- 🐾 Grasses

Some dogs may have more than one allergy.

3 WHICH DOGS ARE MOST AT RISK?

High-risk dogs include:

- 🐾 Dogs with a family history of skin disease
- 🐾 Dogs exposed to fleas
- 🐾 Indoor and outdoor dogs
- 🐾 Dogs with recurring ear or skin problems
- 🐾 Dogs with previous allergic flare-ups

Allergies can develop at any age and may become more severe over time.



4 HOW IS IT DIAGNOSED?

Your veterinarian may:

- 🐾 Perform a physical examination
- 🐾 Check for fleas and parasites
- 🐾 Recommend skin tests or blood allergy testing
- 🐾 Perform food elimination trials
- 🐾 Investigate infections
- 🐾 Rule out other skin diseases

Diagnosis often requires identifying and eliminating possible causes.



5 TREATMENT

Treatment depends on the underlying cause. Management may include:

- 🐾 Flea control and prevention
- 🐾 Allergy medications
- 🐾 Anti-inflammatory treatment
- 🐾 Special diets
- 🐾 Treatment of skin infections
- 🐾 Medicated shampoos or topical therapy
- 🐾 Long-term management may be necessary.

Many allergic pets require ongoing treatment for best results.



6 FLEA ALLERGY DERMATITIS

Flea Allergy Dermatitis (FAD) is the most common allergy seen in dogs.

Signs often include:

- 🐾 Intense itching
- 🐾 Hair loss over the back and tail
- 🐾 Scabs and crusting
- 🐾 Excessive grooming

Year-round flea prevention is essential.



7 LIVING WITH AN ALLERGIC DOG

You can help your dog by:

- 🐾 Maintaining regular parasite prevention
- 🐾 Following prescribed diet and medication
- 🐾 Keeping follow-up appointments
- 🐾 Minimising exposure to known allergens
- 🐾 Bathing products may help relieve itching and support skin barrier health

Good management often allows dogs to live happy, comfortable, itch-free lives.



ADDITIONAL TIPS



Flea allergy is common – prevention is key.



Indoor dogs can still develop allergies.



Flare-ups can occur at any time of year.



Early treatment prevents chronic skin problems.



EVERY DOG COUNTS

If your dog is scratching, overgrooming, losing hair, or developing recurring skin problems, speak with your veterinarian.

Identifying the cause of allergies early can significantly improve your dog's comfort and wellbeing.

