

## Is Your Itchy Pet Driving You CRAZY????

Posted on Apr 11, Posted by [Trusty Vet](#) Category [Latest News](#)



We all know what time of year it is when we start to see that yellow film on our cars. That's right, allergy season and that can mean misery not only for you, but also for your pet.

Dogs and cats can certainly exhibit symptoms of allergies such as their owners including eye discharge and sneezing, but more often, they display itching and scratching as a sign of suffering from allergies.

An allergy is the immune system's excessive response to antigens that the pet is exposed to such as plant pollens, molds, fungi, dust mites, and even human dander. This causes inflammation and irritation of the skin and commonly the development of a secondary skin infection which only makes the inflammation and irritation worse.

Treatment of the infection requires microscopic testing and a round of antibiotics followed by a recheck examination. The underlying allergy can be managed in two ways. The first is immunosuppressive therapy using Atopica or a steroid. The other method is immunomodulation where the pet receives allergy injections to teach the immune system not to respond to the antigen. Both options are reasonable choices and your veterinarian can discuss these and

additional therapies to manage the symptoms.

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