

# QUESTIONS TO ASK THE VETERINARIAN ABOUT MY ITCHY DOG

## WHAT'S CAUSING MY DOG TO SCRATCH SO MUCH?

There are many reasons your dog may be itchy. Most commonly, dogs can be sensitive to seasonal pollens, outdoor and indoor molds, and dust mites (found in carpets, stuffed furniture, and bedding). Your dog may also be allergic to food, fleas, or even ingredients found in shampoos or laundry detergents. Only your vet can determine the reason for your dog's allergic itch and prescribe the necessary treatment. Don't worry, your dog will get relief soon!



## WHAT ARE THE SIGNS I SHOULD LOOK OUT FOR?

All dogs scratch, lick, and chew—but when you notice it becoming more frequent and excessive, it's time to see the vet. Here are some of the most common signs of allergic itch in dogs:



Frequent licking, biting, or scratching



Excessive rolling, rubbing, or scooting



Recurrent ear problems (head shaking, ear discharge/odor, scratching at the ears)



Hair loss



Body odor



Skin changes (rash, redness)

## WHEN SHOULD I SCHEDULE THE APPOINTMENT?

Allergic itch in dogs is easier to treat early, when the first signs appear. Identifying the condition early and getting the right treatment can bring your dog faster relief and help prevent skin infections that can result from scratching. So, when you see the signs, call your vet.

## CAN'T I JUST TRY AN OVER-THE-COUNTER ANTIHISTAMINE TO RELIEVE MY DOG'S ALLERGIC ITCH?

Allergies in dogs are not the same as in humans. Medications we use to relieve our respiratory allergies may not be appropriate for our furry friends. Antihistamines are often not effective in treating allergic itch in dogs. In fact, they can put your dog at risk for progression of allergic itch and infection—because they don't treat the underlying cause and the itch continues.

Allergic itch can also flare up during specific seasons (such as spring and fall, when seasonal allergens are at high levels). Antihistamines have been shown to offer little or no benefit in treating flare-ups in a majority of dogs with allergic itch.<sup>1</sup>

## ARE STEROIDS OK TO USE?

It's important to talk with your vet. Allergic itch in dogs is a lifelong condition that requires lifelong management. Some therapies may not be a good option if your dog requires long-term treatment.

In the short term, steroids can cause unwanted side effects such as excessive drinking, urinating, and appetite.<sup>2</sup>