

Natural Treatment for Dogs with Allergies

Ears

Clean with water plus vinegar (50:50 combination) or rubbing alcohol plus vinegar (50:50)

For Topical Use (Hot Spots)

- To soothe skin irritations and help stop the scratch-itch cycle, apply a wet, warm black teabag on the affected spot. The tannic acid in the teabag has a soothing effect relieving the itch. Hold the bag to the skin for 4-5 minutes. Do this twice a day for at least three days.
- Following the teabag treatment, apply Aloe Vera either from an opened leaf or from purchased gel. Aloe speeds the healing process.

In the Home

- Use as many non-toxic products as possible.
- Do not use scented powder on the carpet (baking soda is fine if odor is a concern).
- For dog blankets use unscented laundry detergent. Use only the amount recommended. Wash in hot water
- Do not use liquid fabric softener when washing the dog blankets.
- Do not use fabric softener sheets when the dog blankets are drying.
- Dog food and water dishes should be glass, ceramic or stainless steel (not plastic).
- Dilute dog shampoo. One cap full or a small squirt of shampoo in a cup of water. Mix well before applying to your pet. Rinse well after shampooing.
- Dilute conditioner. One cap full or a small squirt of conditioner in a cup of water.

Basic Diet

Many commercial pet foods are loaded with highly processed, inferior-quality ingredients, and chemicals that may contribute to overall ill health or trigger allergic sensitivities. A switch to a higher quality, more natural food with fewer potential allergic offenders may reduce allergic reactions.

- Eliminate processed treats.
- Eliminate treats containing gluten (i.e., bread or biscuits made from wheat, barley or rye).
- Appropriate commercial diet or home prepared meals—as discussed with your vet.
- It's okay to feed from the table—but only healthy natural food such as vegetables (no onions) or fruit (no grapes).
- Sauces, gravy made from mixes, processed foods (i.e., deli meat, processed cheese) should not be given to your dog. Fat or gristle

from meat is not appropriate as a dog treat.

Digestive Enzymes

Digestive enzymes improve nutritional absorption, and reduce the allergenic load on the intestines and the dog. These should contain:

- Protease**—to break down protein
 - Lipase** — to break down fats
 - Amylase** — to break down carbohydrates
 - Cellulase** — to break down plant fiber
- A good example is “Prozyme.”

Probiotics

Lactobacillus acidophilus and others are the normal ‘good’ bacteria that should populate the small intestines. They are killed by antibiotics and reduced by stress. Decreased levels of these ‘good’ bacteria results in reduced intestinal health and an imbalanced immune system.

Probiotics are included in “Prozyme.” Or add a lactobacillus acidophilus capsule (or the powder from a capsule) to your dog’s food daily. The amount of these bacteria in ‘live culture plain yogurt’ is inadequate.

Anti-oxidants

Vitamin A, C, D, and E are anti-oxidants and free radical scavengers that help maintain an optimal environment for the functioning of the immune system.

Various herbs and plant extracts contain effective anti-oxidants and free radical scavengers that complement the vitamins. They also have a large variety of other effects on the body including antimicrobial actions, cell membrane stabilization, improvement of vascular integrity, and inhibition of collagen destruction.

Your veterinarian can discuss the selection, doses, forms and easiest ways to get your pet to take these supplements, as appropriate for your particular pet. In some dogs, especially small ones, and all cats, using a combination products makes administration much easier. One of these is Cell Advance 880 (Vetri Science), a complete antioxidant formula designed to prevent free radical damage in dogs. Cell Advance also promotes cellular energy and immune system function.

Salmon Oil (Omega 3) has been shown to help reduce the allergic inflammation affecting both the skin and the intestines by promoting the production of natural anti-inflammatory substances in the body. ■

Dr. Lea Stogdale is the owner of Aesops Veterinary Care, in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, and has a special interest in diabetes in dogs and cats, complementary medicine and nutrition. She can be contacted via her blog at www.aesopsvetcare.wordpress.com.

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