

paws & more

love
your pet

anexa
Vets

Pet Health Newsletter 2017

spring

Allergies edition

Did you know your dog or cat can suffer from seasonal allergies just as you do?

By Chris Hutchings, Veterinarian, Anexa FVC Morrinsville

There are primarily two types of allergies: food allergies and environmental allergies. If your pet gets itchy during spring, summer or autumn, she or he is probably reacting to seasonal, environmental allergens. But if the symptoms continue year-round, it's more likely the sensitivity is to something more constant in the environment (from allergens such as grasses, pollens, moulds, dust mites and wandering dew) or something in your pet's diet.

If your pet has allergies, his or her skin will become very itchy. If your pet is scratching excessively, grooming, biting or chewing at certain areas obsessively and/or has hair loss and skin redness or lesions or red spots, then your pet is trying to relieve the miserable itchiness by any means possible. As the itch-scratch cycle continues, the skin will become inflamed and tender to the touch.

Pets with allergies also often have problems with their ears – especially dogs. The inner part of the ear canals may be itchy and inflamed as part of a generalised allergic response, or they may become infected. Signs your pet's ears are giving him or her problems include scratching at the ears, head shaking, and hair loss around the ears. If infection is present there will often be a smell and a discharge from the ears.

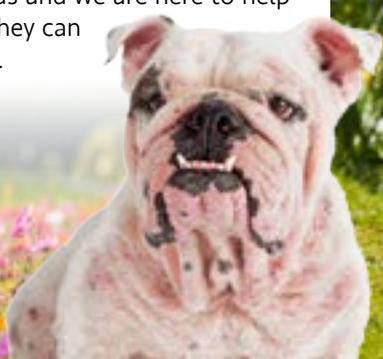
The paws can also show signs of skin allergy resulting in itchiness, excessive chewing and grooming removing fur, paw redness and/or soreness and discolouration.

Allergic reactions are produced by your pet's immune system and can result in infection. The way his or her immune system functions is a result of both nature (genetics) and nurture (environment).

If you see any of the signs of seasonal allergies and are concerned then visit your Anexa FVC Vet. We have a range of treatments to get your pet back on track to a happy and healthy life including topical treatments, oral medicines, veterinary diets and soothing shampoos.

We know how important your pet is to you as he or she is to us and we are here to help you make sure that they are at their happiest and healthiest they can be, and provide you and them, with many years of fun and love.

Call us or pop in to your local clinic for advice on the best option for your loyal and loving pet.





Eyes

When to visit your Vet:

- ✓ Swollen eyes
- ✓ Reddened eyes
- ✓ Weeping eyes
- ✓ Painful eyes - rubbing eyes
- ✓ Eye discharge

Try gently wiping away mild eye discharge daily.



Ears

When to visit your Vet:

- ✓ Strong odour
- ✓ Discharge
- ✓ Recurring ear infections
- ✓ Scratching or pawing at ears
- ✓ Shaking head

Allergies are a common cause of ear infections.

4 Signs your pet may have a seasonal allergy

Skin

When to visit your Vet

- ✓ Constant and obsessive grooming
- ✓ Skin redness or lesions
- ✓ Itching
- ✓ Hair loss

Seasonal allergies are a major cause of many skin problems.

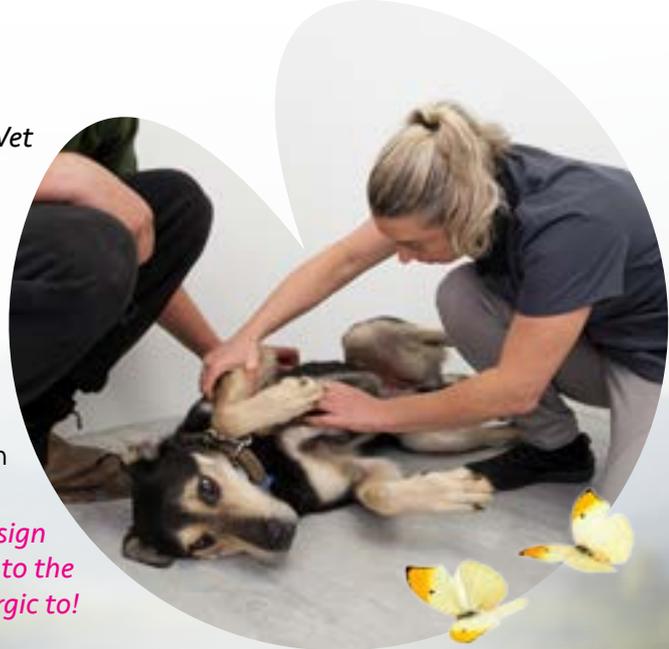


Paws

When to visit your Vet

- ✓ Itching
- ✓ Excessive chewing at paws
- ✓ Grooming is removing fur
- ✓ Paw redness or soreness
- ✓ Discolouration from licking

Itchy paws can be a sign of allergies - may even be the same pollen you're allergic to!



While human symptoms of seasonal allergies often include sneezing or watery eyes, dogs show seasonal allergies differently. They absorb airborne allergens mainly through their skin, not by inhaling it. A cut or tear in the surface of the skin, such as from scratching, allows allergens in. Strengthening the skin through proper nutrition will help to decrease the passage of allergens through the skin barrier and improve the skin healing ability.

For further advice, please talk to your Anexa FVC Vet.

How do I choose which flea product to use? There's just so many!

By Ashley O'Driscoll, Veterinarian, Anexa FVC Ngaruawahia

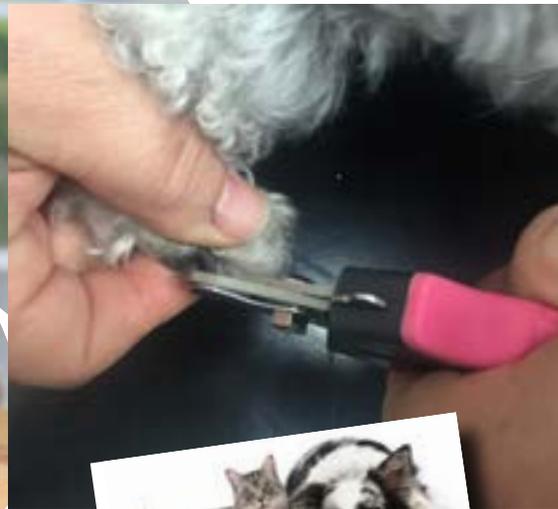
How long do I want the flea treatment to last? Most flea treatments are monthly, but a lot of people find it difficult to remember every month. Extended treatments are available for both dogs and cats. There is a vet-only, waterproof flea collar for dogs and cats that lasts 8 months (note, the Seresto collar is the ONLY effective flea collar). Additionally, there are spot-ons that you can get that last 3 months (cats) or 6 months (dogs).

How do I want to give the flea treatment? Some people prefer giving their animals tasty chews, while others prefer spot-on liquid. Chews can be a problem for the odd picky animal, or for the rare animal with allergies to the ingredients. Spot-on liquids can sometimes leave a greasy stain, may temporarily delay bath-time or swim-time, and the occasional animal may develop a mild skin irritation. The Seresto flea collar does not suit animals who are likely to get the collar caught and broken/lost.

Do I want to treat for worms or ticks at the same time? Only a few types of flea products contain de-worming products or are licensed for ticks. Also bear in mind that most of the flea/worm combination treatments do not kill tapeworm (the worm that your animal will get from eating fleas).

Is my animal allergic to fleas? Some animals get INTENSE itching from just a couple of fleas. These animals have 'flea allergy dermatitis' (FAD) and should be treated with a product licensed to treat FAD.

And remember, the flea products that your veterinary clinic carries come supported by a lot of research. There is no guarantee that a supermarket flea product will do a complete job. Even if the drug contained in the product is the same, there is no guarantee that it will spread over the skin or through the body in the same way as a vet-only product.



Four reasons to clip your pets nails

1. Overgrown and excessively long nails can grow into the pad causing severe problems.
2. If your dog's nails get too long, they can break. This is painful and can sometime results in a nail base infection.
3. Long nails can be uncomfortable to walk on and could cause your dog to walk differently than they naturally would, which can lead to bone damage.
4. Long nails can destroy furniture, floors, and people.

Not all pets need their nails trimmed, but if your pet has a problem with over grown nails, we recommend that you should clip your pets nails every six- eight weeks. If you are unsure, talk to your vet.

To trim your pets nails, visit your local Anexa FVC clinic to pick up a pair of clippers and have a chat with the Vet or Vet nurse on how to go about it. Or book an appointment and one of our Vet Nurses and we can clip your pet's nails for you.

Will my itchy pet be alright if I just leave it?

By Anne Gelling, Veterinarian, Anexa FVC Te Aroha

No, is the short and sharp answer.

When your pet develops an itch, the problem can soon enter a vicious cycle. Your pet's nails and mouth are often not very clean, and therefore itching can damage the skin and allow bacteria to cause an infection in the skin. This causes another problem on top of the original cause of the itch (fleas, mites, allergies).

The longer you leave your pet scratching and injuring it's own skin, the worse the infection can get. It will soon reach a stage where we need to use medication to stop this cycle, while we also still need to find the original cause of the itch and deal with that.

As the world is dealing with the emergence of multi-resistant bacteria (think MRSA for example), it is our duty to protect the antibiotics that we have got and we need your help to do so: the less antibiotics we need to use in your pet the better.

If you bring your itchy pet in earlier rather than later, we have a much better chance to break the cycle by finding and removing the cause of the problem without needing to use antibiotic tablets. Instead, we can use a change of food or a simple medicated wash to cleanse and soothe the skin. The result will be a happy itch-free pet, you as an owner not having to deal with (as many) tablets and we as your vet relieved to be able to do our bit in protecting World Health through appropriate antibiotic stewardship.



Myth: Garlic is a good natural wormer for your pets.

Fact: Even small amounts of garlic can be toxic to dogs and cats.

Did you know the skin is the largest organ in the body?

Skin takes all the wear and tear that nature dishes out, not only to us but to our beloved pets. With the change in seasons a few issues can arise.

Spring can bring on allergies for all of us (e.g. hay fever and dry skin), and your pets can get these too. In our animals, these cause different symptoms and usually affect their eyes, ears, skin and paws.

Contact with environmental allergens such as pollens, grass or dust mites can cause intense itchiness of the face, feet, ears, chest and tummy. Environmental allergies are managed with a combination of medications, medicated washes, environmental changes, and diets that support the skin.

There are Vet only diets that can help to prevent skin conditions. These diets will help support a healthy skin by providing a patented mix of:

- ✓ B-vitamins and amino acids; these support the barrier function of the skin
- ✓ Turmeric, Aloe Vera, Vitamin C and Taurine; these improve natural defences and promote healing
- ✓ Omega 3 and 6 fatty acids to reduce inflammation and improve waterproofness

The other problem as we move into spring is fleas; yes, those nasty parasites. Our pets can be sensitive to fleas and can develop allergies causing serious skin disease. Flea allergies can be quite severe; even if fleas are not seen on your pet, all it takes one flea bite.

Skin issues can vary widely; If you are concerned don't hesitate to book a Vet consult. Your Vet can then diagnose your pet's condition, treat your pet, and make a nutritional recommendation.



Every dog has a tail to tell

By Lucy Picott, Veterinarian,
Anexa FVC Te Kauwhata

New animal welfare rules come into force in October, meaning tail docking is banned unless for Veterinary reasons. These new regulations will prevent lay people docking puppy tails without pain relief, as was allowed before at less than four days old. They state that tail removal can only be carried out by a Vet to benefit a dogs' welfare.

Dogs use their tails for communication with other dogs and humans, and for balance. The primary reasons that a dog's tail is docked is for looks, convenience, and to prevent injury; very few Vet visits are for tail injuries, even in working dogs.

We join over 30 countries worldwide that have banned or restricted tail docking. Australia, Scotland, parts of Canada and Switzerland have all banned the practice outright while countries such as England, Germany and Wales have restricted the practice to certain working dogs, though in these countries tail docking can only be performed by a Veterinarian.

So please get behind these new rules and buy puppies with tails, as they will all have a tail to tell!

Which Shampoo is best?

When it comes to bathing dogs (and sometimes even cats) it can be confusing trying to choose the best wash/shampoo for your pet's specific needs. For starters, it is a good idea to identify exactly why you believe you need to bath your pet. For instance, is it to control irritation or itch, to deodorize the skin and coat (reduce smelliness) or to remove dirt or other material? Once you have identified exactly what it is you aim to treat, you can then find a specific product tailored to your pet's needs. Below are some key things about the products we have in stock to guide your decision.

Remember to always use a shampoo designed specifically for pets- human and baby shampoos do not have the right pH balance for pets. Cheap supermarket shampoos also often have the same problem and can often dry out your pet's skin, or even worse- cause it to become itchy!

If you are still unsure which product is best suited to your pet, speak to one of our helpful Vet Nurses - they are skilled in this area and can provide specialist advice.

Please note: pets with on-going skin irritation of any kind will more than likely require a comprehensive care plan to get the itch and irritation under control initially, so please consider booking a consultation with one of our Vets.

Natural Shampoos (natural/soothing)

- ✓ designed specifically for pets
- ✓ pH balanced for pets' skin
- ✓ suitable for puppies, kittens, and adult pets
- ✓ helps retain skin moisture and coat shine
- ✓ can be used as often as every 2-3 weeks

Oatmeal Shampoos (moisturizing)

- ✓ specially designed for dry coats
- ✓ helps avoid drying out skin
- ✓ actively moisturizes skin
- ✓ suitable for puppies, kittens, & adult pets
- ✓ recommended for dogs with mild itch or dry coats
- ✓ can be used as part of a skin treatment program
- ✓ can be used as often as twice weekly

Medicated Shampoos (anti-bacterial +/- antifungal)

- ✓ prescription shampoos available from vet
- ✓ used to treat overgrowths of skin bacteria and yeast
- ✓ used to treat those smelly, greasy dogs
- ✗ not recommended for normal pets, as can dry skin out
- ✓ always used as part of a skin treatment program
- ✓ can be used as often as twice weekly as a skin treatment



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