

Allergies in Dogs and Cats

Through out the year I deal with itchy dogs and cats that have allergies to various things, either, in the indoor or outdoor environment or to certain food items. However, August through till the first hard frost in October is, by far, the busiest time, in my practice, for this problem.

Ragweed produces a pollen that, when inhaled, can cause a very dramatic allergic response. With people, this is referred to as hay fever. Generally, the symptoms being itchy, runny eyes, cough, sneeze and nasal congestion.

When dogs and cats inhale this pollen, some can have an allergic response which manifests itself through the skin. They also can suffer from respiratory symptoms, but more often an intense itch predominates.

The itch is sometimes so intense that animals actually self mutilate their skin with incessant scratching, licking and chewing. Often, as a result, they end up with a secondary bacterial skin infection called pyoderma.

Because most “over the counter” remedies such as Benadryl, rarely work to relieve the intense itch, it is advisable to seek medical intervention. Often, systemic cortisone and antibiotics are needed to help the pet through this troubling time.

As a rule, if your pet shows such symptoms one year, then it will continue to do so, year after year.

In my practice, I advise all clients that own allergy suffering pets to seek medical intervention the minute the itch begins, hence eliminating the possibility of pyoderma and simplifying treatment.