

## **INSECT BITE REACTIONS**

Many years ago, in my first month of practice I was on call one Sunday afternoon, when a young black Lab presented as an emergency case. This poor pup had a head that was so swollen it resembled a Rottweiler pup, more than it did a Lab puppy.

Having never encountered this before, I was shocked at the severity. I consulted with a colleague, who informed me that the puppy had most likely been stung by a wasp.

Since then, I have encountered this type of case many, many times, mostly in the Spring or Fall when wasps are prolific and active.

This medical condition is termed “angioneurotic edema” and it is a symptom of an allergic reaction. After exposure to the allergen (i.e. wasp venom), the body reacts in tremendous swelling of the face and head.

Sometimes the symptoms can be so severe that the dog is unrecognizable.

We see this most often after an insect bite or sting, anywhere on the body, but also the same symptoms may present after a reaction to certain food items — big culprits being preservatives and dyes in treats and sometimes nuts.

This type of allergic reaction should be viewed as an emergency as it can often lead to breathing difficulties and unfortunately, death.

If your pet appears to be suffering from an allergic reaction, you should seek immediate medical assistance.