

SENSITEST

**THE COMPLETE
ALLERGY SERVICE**



**THERAPY GUIDE
FOR DOGS WITH
SKIN ALLERGIES**



**INNOVATION IN
ANIMAL HEALTHCARE**

 **Avacta**
ANIMAL HEALTH



Your dog has been diagnosed with an allergic skin condition called atopic dermatitis. This means they have been found to have an abnormal response (hypersensitivity) to one or more substances, known as allergens, in their environment.

This is a life-long condition with no quick fix. You may already feel it's been a long journey to reach this far. That is because to get to this diagnosis lots of other conditions will already have been ruled out. The good news is that now you have found the root of the problem, you can make informed decisions about the best way forwards.

This leaflet is designed to help explain the treatment choices available to your dog. As you will learn, the key to long term success is to use a combination of therapies and adapt your treatment plan when required. This approach will allow you to tackle any bumps that occur along the way!

Your veterinary practice will give you additional guidance and can answer any questions you may have.



Ideally all of these options should be used long-term to help reduce the signs of skin allergy:

ALLERGEN AVOIDANCE

Now you have identified which allergens are causing a problem for your dog you can, where possible, take steps to avoid these. This may involve a quick rinse with water after a walk in long grass if pollens are an issue, or implementing house dust mite control measures if these were identified. You should have received a guidance pack with your allergy test results which gives detailed specific advice on how to help with all the allergens that were identified as an issue to your dog.



FLEA CONTROL

Year round effective flea control is an important part of preventing flare-ups. Flea bites can be incredibly itchy so regular protection, either by oral or spot-on products, as recommended by your vet is vital.



TOPICAL THERAPY

This might be in the form of shampoos, sprays or spot-on applications. Topical therapies can be used to help maintain healthy skin and some will contain additional ingredients to help support itchy dogs or treat bacterial or yeast infections.



ORAL SUPPLEMENTS OR SKIN DIETS

These can be used to provide additional ingredients to help support the skin such as essential fatty acids. If your dog also has a food allergy they may be on a specialised diet.

In addition, most dogs will also require one of the therapies below.

It can be necessary, especially as a short term measure either early on in treatment or to control flare-ups, for more than one of the therapies to be used together. There is a table showing more specific information about each of these individual treatments on the back of the leaflet.

ALLERGEN SPECIFIC IMMUNOTHERAPY

→ This involves injecting initially, very small amounts of the allergens identified as causing the allergic reaction into the scruff of the neck. These allergens stimulate the immune system in the same way as if it was coming in contact with the real allergens, but because such a small amount is given it doesn't trigger the symptoms seen in an allergic response. Over time the injections are administered in increasing amounts and concentrations until a tolerance/maintenance level is reached. This exposure allows your pet to desensitise its reaction to those allergens so that when it comes in contact with them for real, they cause less of a problem. Often while building up the injections, other treatments are used temporarily to control the symptoms.

IMMUNOMODULATORY DRUGS – STEROIDS, CYCLOSPORIN, OCLACITINIB

→ In contrast to stimulating the immune system and changing how it reacts when coming into contact with the relevant allergens, these drugs all reduce the symptoms of allergy by dampening down the immune response. Although you want to stop the itch, the immune system also performs a vital role in defending the body against genuine threats such as infections and injury. Each of these drugs has a different way of modulating the immune system, but generally speaking, the better solutions stop the itch with limited impact on other important functions. Steroids are the least specific at targeting the allergic response so are associated with more generalised side effects (see table for more details). Cyclosporin and oclacitinib offer a more targeted approach.

MANAGING FLARE-UPS

Occasional flare-ups are almost inevitable, even if you do everything right. Allergic dogs are more prone to get skin infections. In addition factors like an exceptionally high pollen count may contribute if pollens are one of their triggers. Your vet will need to identify what has triggered the flare-up before advising appropriate additional treatment.

If you start to get flare-ups more often a full review of your current therapies and further investigation may be required. Allergic disease can change over time with new substances starting to trigger the allergic response, so always speak to your vet if you are concerned.

THESE ARE SOME OF THE OPTIONS AVAILABLE WHEN FLARE-UPS OCCUR:

TOPICAL ANTIBACTERIAL AND ANTIFUNGAL THERAPY

Shampoos, mousses, sprays and wipes can all be extremely effective in treating skin infections. These are often now used in preference to oral antibiotics.

ORAL ANTIBIOTICS

For deeper or prolonged infections oral antibiotics might be required. A swab of the skin may need to be taken to identify the type of bacteria causing the problem and help select the right antibiotic.

TOPICAL STEROIDS

Steroids sprays are very useful to control localised areas of itching without the same side effects as giving oral steroid tablets.

ORAL STEROIDS OR OCLACITINIB

Short courses of oral steroids or oclacitinib can be helpful to break the itch-scratch cycle.

FOR MORE
INFORMATION GO TO
ANIMAL-ALLERGY.COM



A COMPARISON OF THERAPIES FOR DOGS WITH SKIN ALLERGIES

THERAPY	ALLERGEN SPECIFIC IMMUNOTHERAPY	ORAL STEROIDS	CYCLOSPORIN (Atopica™, Sporimune™, Cycloavance™, Modulis™)	OCLACITINIB (Apoquel™)
Number of dogs expected to significantly improve	2 out of 3 dogs.	2 out of 3 dogs.	2 out of 3 dogs.	2 out of 3 dogs.
Cost	£-££	£	£££-££££	£££-££££
Routine administration and monitoring	Injection once a month, vial lasts 10 months.	Oral tablet given daily or every few days. Regular blood and urine tests are recommended as long-term use may induce severe side-effects.	Oral capsules or liquid given every few days, must be given on an empty stomach (put directly into mouth not with food).	Oral tablet given daily. Regular blood tests are recommended long-term to monitor for side effects.
Time to take effect	Several weeks / months.	Within hours.	Up to several weeks.	Within hours.
Benefits	Deals with the specific allergens relevant to your dog. Has the potential to cure.	Can also be used alongside allergen specific immunotherapy, or to treat flare-ups.	Can also be used alongside allergen specific immunotherapy. More specific at targeting the allergic part of immune response than steroids.	Can also be used alongside allergen specific immunotherapy or to treat flare-ups. More specific at targeting the allergic part of immune response than steroids.
Most common side effects	Itching at site of injection for a few days, normally self resolves without treatment.	Short term: drinking and urinating more, increased appetite. Long term: increased risk of diabetes, gastric ulceration, pancreatitis, certain endocrine and liver problems, infections and delayed wound healing.	Short term: vomiting, diarrhoea. Long term: increased susceptibility to infection and the development of cancer.	Short term: diarrhoea, vomiting, not wanting to eat, development of skin lumps, lethargy, drinking lots, infections, cystitis, lymph node enlargement, increased appetite and aggression. Long term: increased susceptibility to infection and the development of cancer.

Please note: Before commencing any form of therapy exclusions need to be considered.