

Pet Allergies – Nothing to Sneeze At  
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Once again, new flowers will burst into life, plants will thrive, and a sweet fragrance will fill the air. And so will the symptoms of seasonal allergies – for animals and humans alike.

Blooming plants, grasses and flowers can trigger allergic reactions, called atopy, in dogs and cats. Similar to hay fever, pets with such allergies typically have itchy skin and will scratch, bite or lick themselves constantly, often creating sores that become secondary infections.

Allergic reactions can be amplified by an unrecognized nutritional deficiency. Your pet's immune system must receive proper nourishment to do its job at peak efficiency. One of the best things you can do is feed your pet a premium high-quality pet food. This will always help keep your companion healthy and well balanced.

In milder cases, medications may be used to control itching. In more severe situations, skin testing can be performed to identify the specific substances to which your pet is allergic. Treatments for allergies may include immunotherapy, antihistamines, fatty acid supplements, soothing medicated shampoos and antibiotics for secondary bacterial infection. Corticosteroids, such as prednisone, are effective at reducing the symptoms of atopy, but they can have many serious side effects that limit their long-term use and should be administered cautiously.

Managing pet allergies takes some human patience. However, by combining different methods of therapy, paying attention to your pet's environment and observing your pet so that you can begin treatment as early as possible, you can make your pet feel his best.

Talk to your veterinarian if you think your pet may be suffering from seasonal allergies.