



August 2018 Newsletter

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Spotlight on: Allergies

Why is my pet licking and chewing his feet?



It seems that everywhere you look, food allergies are being blamed for a variety of vague symptoms. But food allergies (more correctly termed Adverse Food Reactions) account for only about 5-15% of allergic dogs and cats. And true anaphylactic food allergies are very rare in pets. So, does your itchy pet have a food allergy? Maybe. But more likely, they have Atopic Dermatitis. Atopic dermatitis is a common cause of chronic itching, caused by an inappropriate immune reaction to one or more substances in the environment.

Did you know: recurrent ear infections are very common in pets with atopic dermatitis.

The symptoms usually start when a pet is young, between 1 and 5 years, and certain breeds tend to be predisposed (like labradors, doodles, and shih tzus). The best way to control symptoms is to limit exposure to the offending substance, but that isn't usually practical. Luckily, we have more and more options for treatment.

This is a problem we can't "fix". Instead, we tailor treatment to each patient to keep them as comfortable as possible.

Some pets respond to antihistamines, but these are generally less effective in pets than people. Topical therapy with medicated shampoos, mousses, and sprays are used frequently. Just like in people, allergy testing helps determine what substances bother a pet and an extract is made to be given by injection or orally, to desensitize them. There are also anti-inflammatory and anti-itch medications that are useful in most pets.

The newest therapy is a monoclonal antibody injection, that works with the body's immune system to remove the protein that signals itch. So far, this has proven quite effective when given every 4-8 weeks.

Pets with atopic dermatitis are very prone to recurrent bacterial and yeast infections of the skin and ears, so these must be addressed as they arise. It is also imperative to control fleas on a year-round basis. Sensitive pets can be set off by the bite of just one flea! It can be a long process to determine which treatment a pet will respond to the best, but it is so rewarding to get an itchy friend comfortable again!



Adoptable Friend Update

Say hello to Michelangelo! This little cutie is about 9 weeks old and came to us seriously ill with pneumonia. He has completed treatment and is ready for a home! Because of being so sick at such an early age, he has some special needs and would like to find a family that doesn't mind quirky! If you could be that home, come meet this squish!

FDA Investigating Link Between Grain-Free Food and Heart Disease

A surprising number of new cases of Dilated Cardiomyopathy, a serious heart disease, have been seen in dogs being fed grain-free foods listing potatoes or legumes as a primary ingredient. Dilated cardiomyopathy is a disease that causes the heart chambers to enlarge and leads to heart failure, typically only in predisposed breeds. The FDA is investigating the connection to their diet, which is currently unclear. A list of diets being investigated has not been released. [FDA Press Release](#)

Canine Influenza Virus is Spreading

Dogs are susceptible to two strains of influenza; both are highly contagious and airborne, with the highest risk of infection coming from social environments like groomers, boarding facilities, and dog parks. Some boarding facilities are now requiring the vaccine because outbreaks are on the rise. Verified positive cases of both strains have occurred in Oregon and Washington. Not every dog that contracts and sheds the virus will have symptoms but cases can be very serious and can require hospitalization. [Find out more.](#)

Wild Bison are Back in Banff after 140 Years

A herd of 31 plains bison is roaming Banff National Park's Panther Valley for the first time in 140 years as part of a five-year reintroduction project. The important role bison play in the ecosystem "makes this even more significant than perhaps many other species that we work on in the park," said Resource Conservation Manager Bill Hunt. [Calgary Herald](#)

Did you know...

- ... cats can't be vegetarians. They are "obligate carnivores" and *must* eat meat.
- ... ringworm isn't a worm. It is a fungus. It gets that name from the rash it produces in humans.
- ... dogs don't have collar bones. This allows them to have a longer stride. And cats have free-floating collar bones which allows them to squeeze through small spaces.
- ... a litter of kittens can have multiple fathers. A cat can come into heat by 6 month of age.
- ... an ostrich's eye is bigger than its brain. What a bird brain!

Enter to Win!



Yeti cooler, 2 Yeti 30 oz tumblers, and 2 folding camp chairs. Get an entry for every purchase of 6 months of Heartgard and Nexgard or 6 months of feline Frontline Gold. Now through September 30th.



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