



THE BARRACKS  
VET SURGERY  
MOSMAN

---

## ALLERGIES IN DOGS

---

### Pre-disposition

As in humans, allergies are becoming increasingly common in dogs, especially in specific breeds such as Poodles, Pugs, Bulldogs, Shah Peis, Labradors and Staffordshire Terriers. Most have a small genetic pool where human selection has inadvertently made them more susceptible to skin and allergy conditions.

### Causes

Allergies can usually be blamed on one of the following three causes:

- Environmental (grasses, pollens, dust mites)
- Food (animal proteins, cereals, dairy)
- Fleas (in some dogs, a single bite can cause flea allergy dermatitis and 2 weeks of itching).

### Symptoms

Signs that may develop include:

- Pruritis - itchiness or chewing, especially around the face and ears, chest, abdomen and paws.
- Malodour - increased smell due to bacterial or fungal overgrowth and skin infection such as "hotspots".
- Episodes of vomiting, diarrhea and flatulence.

### The role of protein

Many people are surprised to learn that dogs are frequently allergic to beef or lamb. Their dog may show no hint of this until a certain age, then start having reactions to their usual food or treats.

Whilst protein in the diet is crucial to growth in pregnant or lactating dogs, you may be surprised to learn that older dogs will benefit from less protein. Try incorporating vegetable and brown rice into their diet. When rewarding your dog, try something which does not contain protein. This will also reduce strain on the liver and kidneys, and so may assist with controlling certain diseases related to old age.

### Medication

The Vet can help diagnose your dog's problem, then dispense medications from antihistamines and cortisone to pain killers, antibiotics and anti-itch treatments. He will create an ongoing diet and treatment plan which can vastly increase your dog's comfort, sleep and quality of life. However it is important to remember that allergies can only be controlled, not cured.