Canine skin allergies occur due to an abnormal skin barrier.

Allergic dogs are prone to recurrent skin & ear infections.

You can significantly help your dog through regular use of topical therapy.

Make Canine Skin Solutions™ Recovery Shampoo & Spray a part of your dog’s life!

Allergy is a common and frustrating problem for the dog owner but recent scientific understanding of the biology of canine allergy and the itch cycle have allowed scientists and veterinary dermatologists to provide your dog with a variety of therapies to lessen the effects of this often severe and debilitating disease. Below is a list of common therapies often recommended by veterinary dermatologists and veterinarians for the treatment of canine atopic dermatitis (CAD).

Find a dermatologist to help your dog at www.acvd.org.

Often no one therapy controls 100% of allergy symptoms all of the time- so it is quite common for multiple therapies to be used together in an attempt to decrease itch, prevent/control secondary infections and to promote the health of your dog’s skin. This is termed a “multimodal” approach and is typically the best approach to use in moderate to severe cases of allergy.

Allergy vaccine therapy (injectable or oral/sublingual)

Allergy vaccine therapy is a long-term way to lessen the symptoms of allergy by exposing the patient in a controlled fashion (either by subcutaneous injections or sublingual oral routes) to allergens that they have a known sensitivity. These allergens are identified first through allergy testing (typically via skin testing or serum testing). The goal is to induce “tolerance” to these allergens (“desensitization”) so that the dog no longer becomes sensitive upon exposure. The therapy is often 60-70% effective (based on the accuracy of testing) but does require up to 12-18 months for the maximum benefits. This therapy is the ONLY therapy with the possibility of lessening the dog’s dependence on drug therapies because it changes the way the dog’s immune system responds to allergen exposure.

Apoquel® (Oclacitinib)

Classified as a biologic by the FDA, Apoquel works by targeting the cytokines that are involved in itch and that are dependent on JAK1 and JAK3 enzyme activity. The rapid onset of action provides relief for many dogs often within a few days. Apoquel should not be used in dogs less than 12 months of age or in dogs with a history of malignant neoplasia.
Canine skin allergies occur due to an abnormal skin barrier.

Allergic dogs are prone to recurrent skin & ear infections.

You can significantly help your dog through regular use of topical therapy.

Make Canine Skin Solutions™ Recovery Shampoo & Spray a part of your dog’s life!

While short-term negative side effects are uncommon there are concerns regarding usage of any biologic long-term regarding its affects regarding immunity (infections, cancer). Demodectic mange and papillomavirus (while uncommon) have been seen with this drug. This is why many veterinary dermatologists recommend combining this drug with allergy vaccine therapy.

Atopica® (Modified Cyclosporine)

Originally known most commonly as an immunosuppressant to prevent organ transplant rejection, this drug has safely been used in dogs at lower doses to provide anti-inflammatory effects for the treatment of CAD. This drug can affect multiple parts of the adaptive immune response, notably decreasing T-cell activation and levels of certain pro-inflammatory cytokines. Relief is more gradual than seen with corticosteroids or Apoquel® but typically occurs over the initial 4-6 weeks of therapy. Most common negative side effects seen are decreased appetite, vomiting and diarrhea. Atopica should not be used in dogs with a history of viral or fungal infections or malignant neoplasia. Because this drug affects the immune system there are always concerns with long-term therapy regarding affects regarding immunity (infections, cancer).

Canine Atopic Dermatitis Immunotherapeutic Injection (anti-IL 31 monoclonal antibody therapy)

This is the newest therapy to arrive on the market to reduce the symptoms of CAD. It has received a conditional license from the USDA and is currently being utilized mostly by veterinary dermatologists. This novel therapy (CADI) contains an antibody that specifically targets and neutralizes interleukin-31 (IL-31), a key protein that is responsible for sending the itch signal to the brain. Clinical efficacy seems to be around 70-80%. It is available as a once-monthly subcutaneous injection and helps provide many dogs with sustained relief from the itching for about 4 weeks. Because of this, the injection will need to be repeated, “as needed”. Minimal negative side effects have been observed to date but remember this therapy is new!
**Glucocorticoid Medications ("Steroids")**
Corticosteroids are one of the most common treatments prescribed and can stop the inflammation and related itching quickly. However, in many dogs they have systemic side effects that negatively impact the quality of life of the dog (increased thirst, urination and hunger; panting) and its owner, and, when used in excessive amounts for prolonged periods of time, can have serious medical consequences (weight gain, muscle wasting, liver disease, iatrogenic hyperadrenocorticism, GI ulceration, urinary tract infections are a few).

**Antihistamines**
Antihistamines have long been recommended for dogs with CAD and they can be effective in milder cases of itch. However, we now know that histamine does not appear to be the primary cause of itch/allergy in dogs which explains why “anti”-histamines are not as effective as other medications. Be sure to check the dose with your veterinarian before administering, as the dose for dogs and people are not the same. In addition, make sure to NEVER give your dog an antihistamine that contains a decongestant.

**Fatty acids (Fish oils)**
Fatty acids are specific types of polyunsaturated fats that can have anti-inflammatory effects. They are used to help coat quality, joint health, and can have mild anti-itch effects. The two types we are interested in are omega-3 and omega-6. Fatty acids that dogs cannot produce themselves and required as part of their diet are termed “essential”. Both the ratio of omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids and the form in which it is delivered are important. Many veterinarians recommend a brand called 3V Caps HP because the fatty acids are available in a “free” form making them more bioavailable and usable by the body. This therapy is typically most effective in mild allergies or as part of a multimodal treatment plan in dogs with severe allergy.

Please visit our [Educational Resource Page](#) for additional information about allergic skin disease.