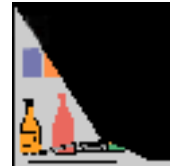




ALLERGIC REACTIONS



There are many different causes for allergic reactions in pets. Some of the most common causes are insect bites or stings and reactions to medications. There is a great range in the severity of allergic reactions. Mild cases cause only localized redness and itching. In more severe reactions, there is generalized swelling, hives, pain, or itching over a large area of the body. In rare cases, an extreme form of allergic reaction, called anaphylaxis, can result in difficulty breathing, collapse, and death.

Allergic reactions should be treated as soon as possible. Early treatment can help prevent a mild to moderate reaction from becoming more severe. Initially, most pets are usually treated with injections of corticosteroids and antihistamines. Depending on the severity of the reaction, your pet may be hospitalized for further treatment. Oral medications are usually prescribed for a few days following the reaction. Corticosteroids may make your pet thirsty and cause increased urination. Normally, pets will fully recover within 48 hours. Watch your pet closely for at least 24 hours following an allergic reaction to be sure the condition is not worsening. If you observe any signs of difficulty breathing or collapse a veterinarian must see your pet immediately. If this occurs after hours when the clinic is closed, take your pet directly to the emergency clinic.

Pets that have had one allergic reaction in the past are at increased risk of future reactions. If your pet has had an allergic reaction to insect bites or stings, we generally recommend you keep antihistamines on hand at home to give at the first sign of a problem in the future. Pets who have had an allergic reaction to medication should never again receive this medication.