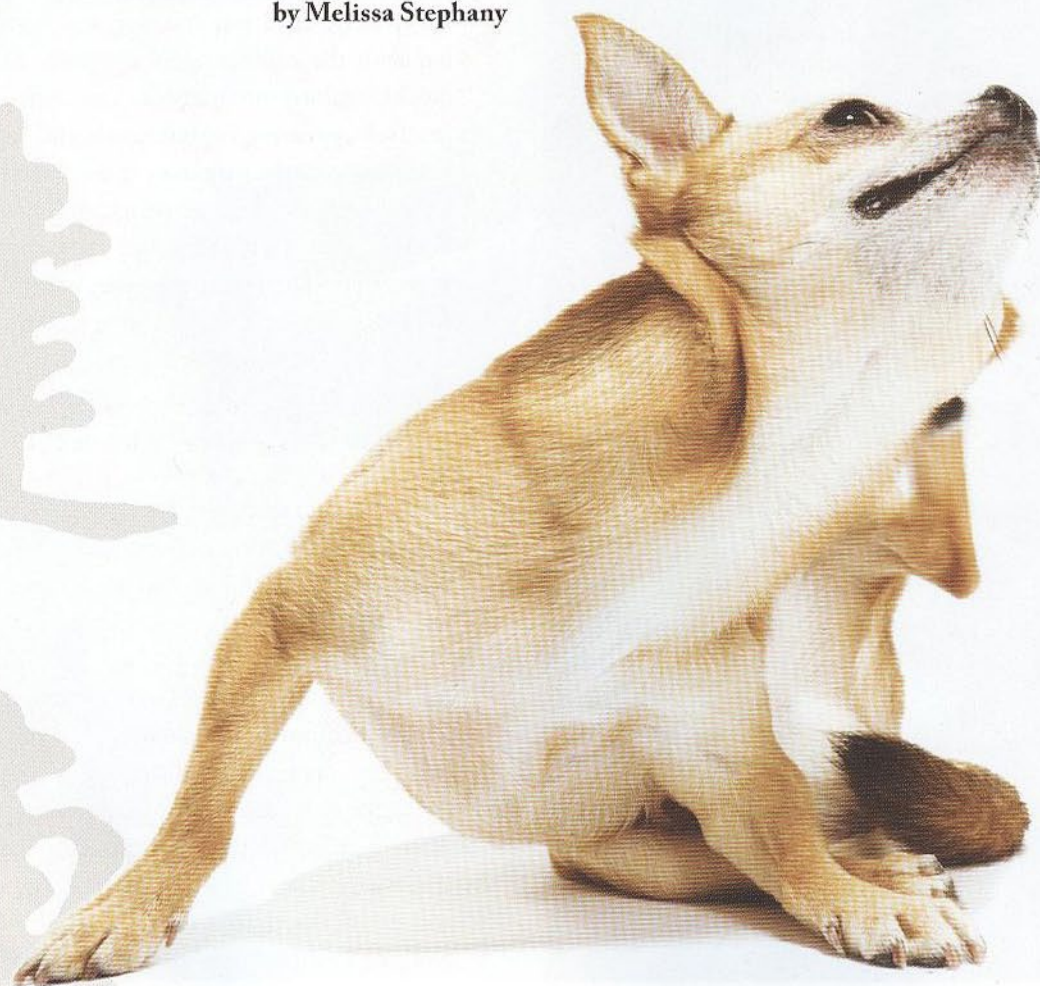


# ALLERGY RELIEF

A HOLISTIC ALTERNATIVE TO STEROIDS

by Melissa Stephany



For years, Kelly O'Neal of Annapolis struggled with the health of her beloved rescue dog, Harley. Harley, a Golden Retriever, suffered from a number of severe allergies causing him to scratch the sides of his body until they were raw. Harley also developed weepy lesions on his skin causing his coat to stink and feel goopy to the touch.

Kelly attempted to treat his allergies with a number of different remedies. She went to a traditional veterinarian and was given prednisone, a corticosteroid, to treat the constant itching. The pharmaceuticals caused Harley to develop polyuria/polydipsia (PU/PD), which is characterized by the passage of large volumes of urine and excessive thirst. The PU/PD led to frequent "accidents." Kelly also tried using numerous topical medicines, but found little relief for her suffering dog.

After two frustrating years, a friend of Kelly's suggested that she explore some holistic options to relieve Harley's allergies. Kelly followed the advice and sought out some alternative options including acupuncture and Chinese herbs. Through an old college friend Kelly was introduced to Dr. Chris Bessent, founder of Herbsmith, Inc. She recommended an herbal formula specifically designed to treat dogs' severe allergies. Kelly found this remedy to be very effective with none of the negative side effects that she encountered with traditional pharmaceutical treatments.

## TRADITIONAL CHINESE MEDICINE

There are many pharmaceutical options on the market that promise quick results, but the ensuing side effects can be worse than the allergic condition they are intended to treat. Dr. Chris Bessent says there is an alternative way to address problems like these. Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), a more natural, holistic approach to veterinary care, has proven to be successful for thousands of years.

"Traditional Chinese Medicine teaches us that allergies, like all medical conditions, are symptoms of an underlying

disharmony within the body," says the veterinarian. "To effectively treat the problem, you must first address the underlying disharmony that is causing the allergy to occur."

An allergy is a hypersensitive reaction to contact with an allergen from a food or an inhalant. These allergens cause the body's defenses to overreact, which leads to the overheating of a dog's body. Some of the associated symptoms include itchy and reddened skin, panting and restlessness. Another way that allergies can affect a dog's body is through the accumulation of phlegm. All of these symptoms stem from an imbalance in the dog's liver, referred to as "Liver Qi stagnation". According to TCM, the liver is the organ responsible for the smooth flow of Qi (pronounced "chee"), which is the

body's overall life force. The liver acts as a pump to produce a smooth flow of energy throughout the body. When that pump overheats as a result of an allergic reaction, the vital fluids within the body evaporate and phlegm accumulates. The accumulation of phlegm causes the dog's coat to give off a foul odor and become greasy or goopy.

Any imbalance within the body can be explained using the model of yin and yang, which is at the base of all TCM theory. Both yin and yang exist within the body at all times. Yin represents the concepts of cooling, fluids, quietness, and passive behavior. Yang represents the concepts of heat, inflammation,

outward energy, and aggressive behavior. A healthy animal will have a perfect balance between the two forces. According to TCM, any imbalance of the two is regarded as a disease. From this perspective, allergies are commonly seen as an excess of yang (heat) in the body causing the allergic hypersensitivity. Bessent compares the body of an allergic dog like Harley, to a boiling pot of water. "In order to stop the boiling of the water, you can either turn down the heat or add more water to the pot." Herbsmith Clear AllerQi contains cooling herbs that bring down the yang (or heat) within the body and yin tonifying (gently stimulating) herbs that increase the fluids of the body overall, bringing the dog's body back to a balanced state.





steroids over the course of several years, it becomes more difficult to resolve the underlying disharmony. At that point, herbs can certainly be used to resolve the issue, but the treatment typically takes more time. "It's really about the underlying disharmony," Bessent says, "and when you resolve that, the symptoms of the allergies go away."

The most important idea to remember about Chinese herbal blends is that they do not just treat the symptoms of allergies. They address the root imbalance, making for a happier, healthier dog.

Kelly is now happy to report that Harley's allergies have been under control for more than a year. She is approaching the upcoming allergy season without the anxiety that she had in previous years. 🐾

*Resources Mentioned in This Article*  
Chris Bessent, DVM, Oconomowoc, WI.  
(262) 966-9891;

*Herbsmith. Herbsmith Clear AllerQi addresses allergies for pets.*  
(800) 624-6429; [www.herbsmithinc.com](http://www.herbsmithinc.com)

## FOODS TO AVOID FOR AN ALLERGIC DOG

- LAMB
- VENISON
- WHEAT
- HIGH-GLYCEMIC INDEX FRUITS (SUCH AS BANANAS)

for the animal in the long run. "Corticosteroids work great the first year by bringing down the itching," Bessent says. "The dog feels great and only has to take a small amount. However, steroids damage the liver over time."

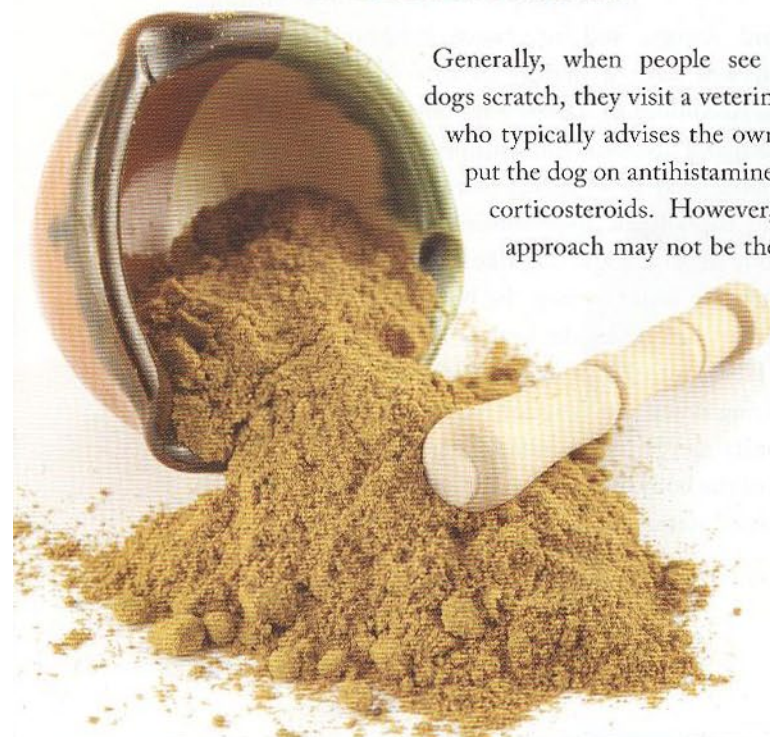
The consequences of using corticosteroids can accumulate relatively quickly. During the next allergy season the dog often has more extensive allergies and the symptoms are more extreme. Instead of allergies starting in April and May, the allergies start in March and extend into late November. The itching increases and the dog develops more lesions. To quell the symptoms, the dog is given more steroids and antihistamines, and the cycle of symptom suppression continues. In addition, the long-term use of traditional pharmaceuticals causes damage to the liver, creating an even greater imbalance within the body. After years of treatment, the dog is typically allergic to just about everything. Allergies often continue into the dead of winter and can extend throughout the year.

Chinese herbs address the problem from a holistic point of view. In the early stages, the dog will respond quickly to the herbs. However, when the liver is damaged with

Herbs used in TCM focus on a holistic way of treating diseases. In the case of canine allergies, they work to bring down the heat within the body, thus reducing inflammation of the skin and accumulation of phlegm. Unlike traditional pharmaceuticals, the herbs address the root cause of the allergy while still relieving the associated symptoms.

### A HOLISTIC APPROACH

Generally, when people see their dogs scratch, they visit a veterinarian who typically advises the owner to put the dog on antihistamines and corticosteroids. However, this approach may not be the best



# SO MANY SEASONAL ALLERGIES... SO FEW OPTIONS...

Seasonal canine allergies are among the most troublesome issues facing today's pet owner. There are so few options for someone who is looking to avoid harsh treatments while seeking a natural yet effective approach. Herbsmith Clear AllerQi is a formula that contains cooling herbs that harmonize the body's defenses to help manage seasonal allergies.



## HERBSMITH<sup>TM</sup> CLEAR ALLERQI

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Living Ruff  
Silver Spring | 301-495-7833  
Pet Barn  
Annapolis | 410-573-0404  
Precious Pet Cottage  
Millersville | 410-987-2010

Wash the Wag  
Baltimore | 410-366-7297  
Baron's K-9 Country Store  
Bel Air | 410-838-6369

Elements of Energy  
Highland | 301-854-0403  
Kibble & Klips / Doggie De Tails  
Edgewater | 410-956-9559  
Also available online at  
[www.HolisticAnimalSupply.com](http://www.HolisticAnimalSupply.com)

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