

[Holistic Solutions for your Dog's Allergies]

THE ALTERNATIVE TO STEROIDS

by Pam Wahl

An allergy is the body's overreaction to a particular allergen, whether it is food, environmental, contact, or something else. When the body overreacts to a particular allergen, excessive internal heat is created. This heat manifests itself into the issues we often see in our dogs-- itchy skin, hot spots, restlessness, panting, greasy, smelly coat, ear or eye discharge, and skin that is hot to the touch. The most important thing to note is that the root of all these issues is the heat that is created by the exposure to the allergen.

Generally, when people see their dogs begin to itch or develop other symptoms of allergies, their response has been to visit a veterinarian, who would typically advise the owner to put the dog on corticosteroids. However, this approach may not be the best for the animal in the long run. Dr. Chris Bessent, a holistic veterinarian and the founder of Herbsmith Inc., says, "Corticosteroids work great the first year by bringing down the itching. 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 August and September, when ragweed is at its height, the allergies start in July and extend into late October. 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 winter and can extend through the entire year.

Many of the options available that address allergies don't get to the root of the problem, which is the heat burning inside the dog's body. However, there are some options that cool that heat and truly address the issue instead of simply covering it up like a band-aid.

The use of Chinese herbs is one option that is increasing in popularity because of the herbs' effectiveness, and the lack of side-effects. 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 during the course of several years with steroids, 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.

Dr. Bessent started Herbsmith as a way to bring her years of experience formulating veterinary herbal blends to a larger group of pet owners. Her line of formulas includes options for various different issues in canines and equine. Herbsmith Clear AllerQi offers a combination of herbs with cooling and tonifying properties to decrease inflammation and restore balance in the dog's system without damaging the liver.

The most important idea to remember about Chinese herbal blends is that they do not just address the symptoms of allergies. They get to the root imbalance, making for a happier, healthier dog. "It's really about the underlying disharmony," Bessent says, "And when you resolve that, the symptoms of the allergies go away."

SO MANY SEASONAL ALLERGIES, SO FEW OPTIONS...

Canine seasonal 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.



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