

Mountainview Animal Hospital

SPRING NEWSLETTER

The bottom Line

The skin is the largest organ in the body and serves a number of functions including protection of the body from potentially harmful environmental influences. An important part of treating allergies is to strengthen this organ with the proper nutrition and supplements.



Atopy is a genetic condition in dogs. It is seen more commonly in Labrador Retrievers, Golden Retrievers, Lhasa Apsos, Shih Tzus, Dalmatians, West Highland White Terriers, Jack Russell Terriers, Yorkshire Terriers, Chow Chows, Schnauzers, Irish Setters, Boxers, Shar Peis and Bulldogs.

SKIN SUPPORT FOR ITCHY ALLERGIC PETS

One of the most common skin problems seen by veterinarians is allergic skin disease. Allergic skin disease can affect pets at any age and of any breed. These pets are itchy, often scratching to the point of hair loss. Many dogs will have little red bumps, red itchy ears, itchy paws, circular red scabs, skin that is turning black and wrinkly, or a greasy, smelly coat. Some dogs will have many of these symptoms at once, while others will have only one chronically infected ear or itchy paws. Often secondary bacterial or fungal infections will occur because the skin's natural defenses are damaged. Cats will show slightly different signs; they will either have tiny little skin scabs all over called millitary dermatitis or large, moist, red spots called eosinophilic granulomas. Treating these pets with antibiotics or steroids will often give them relief, but this is only a temporary solution.

To make matters worse, there are different types of allergies that can cause skin disease and some pets can have more than one type of allergic skin disease. For instance, some pets have food allergies that affect them all year round and atopy that causes the itchiness to intensify every fall.

- **Food allergies:** Thought to cause only 10 – 20 % of allergic skin disease in dogs, but up to 50 % of the problems in cats. Diagnosing food allergies requires the exclusive feeding of a novel protein and carbohydrate diet to your pet for 12 weeks. In dogs we choose Z/D ultra and in cats HYPOallergenic or D/D to feed during the food trial. Cheating is not tolerated; this means no treats, people food, even raw hide bones.
- **Flea-bite hypersensitivity:** These pets are intensely itchy, their skin is red, bumpy, and scabby and they are losing fur. The diagnosis is made by finding the fleas or the flea dirt. This is treated by eliminating the fleas and treating the skin's inflammation with steroids and antibiotics if necessary, until the allergic reaction subsides.
- **Contact allergies:** This is the type of allergic reaction we see to air fresheners, household cleaners, etc. Often these pets have repeated eruptions of hives. Contact allergies are treated by removing the cause and treating the allergic reaction with antihistamines and steroids until the reaction subsides.
- **Atopy:** This is the most common form of allergic skin disease in and the most complicated. Atopy can be caused by breathing in the allergen or absorbing it through the skin. This allergy can be present year round or seasonally. Seasonally allergic pets will be itchy only in the spring, late summer/fall or some from May until the snow falls. These pets don't respond to food trials, eliminating contact to household products and they don't have fleas. The only way to identify what they are allergic to is to have allergy tests done and give them allergy shots. Unfortunately, many pets do not respond to this treatment either. So we are left with managing their itchy skin the best we can.

Treating allergic skin disease, particularly atopy, is complex and requires a multilayered approach. A new and exciting tool in the fight against allergic skin

The bottom Line

When changing your dog from the old diet to Skin Support SS 21, do it slowly. Wean your dog onto the new food by slowly blending it in over several days. This will prevent digestive upsets that may occur with a sudden diet change.

Skin Support SS 21 is available at veterinary hospitals in 3 kg, 8 kg and 15 kg bags.

The curcumin added to the food for its anti-inflammatory properties give the food a natural yellow colour. As this natural yellow colour may stain, contact with delicate items should be avoided.



disease for dogs is a specially designed veterinary diet – SKIN SUPPORT SS 21. This diet takes food to a whole new level.

The basic principle of this diet is to enhance the natural defenses of the skin, support faster healing, reduce the inflammation that causes itching, and enhance the body's immune system against the fungus and bacteria that take advantage of these allergic pets. A dog with healthier skin and immune system will be less susceptible to outside allergens. Any dog with allergic skin disease, even the ones that are only seasonally affected should try this diet. And remember, it takes time for nutritional changes to occur, so the best time to start this diet is now, before the seasonal itching begins.

SKIN SUPPORT SS 21 – NUTRITIONAL DIFFERENCES

- Contains limited ingredients of Manhaden fish and rice. These ingredients are rarely associated with food allergies in dogs. Treating possible concurrent food allergies may reduce the dog's sensitivity to other allergens.
- Has enhanced levels of vitamin A, vitamin C, taurine and zinc which have been shown to have specific roles in skin healing, improving immune function and promoting tissue recovery after damage.
- Is enriched with biotin, niacin, pantothenic acid and linoleic acid. This combination of vitamins and oils plays a crucial role in the barrier function of the skin.
- Is enriched with long chain omega 3 fatty acids for its anti-inflammatory properties.
- Contains Curcumin, an extract of tumeric, for its anti-inflammatory properties.
- Contains Aloe Vera gel for its anti-inflammatory, anti-itch, anti-bacterial and analgesic properties.
- Naturally preserved.

CONGRATULATIONS TO MELANIE

Melanie is a Registered Veterinary Technician (Veterinary Nurse) and works here at Mountainview Animal Hospital in the evenings. Some of you may have met her when coming to pick up your pets after surgery. Melanie has been with us for two years now but is leaving us for maternity leave. On Sunday February 28th, she and her husband had a beautiful baby girl, Halle. Although we hope she enjoys this time with her family, we will miss her and we look forward to her return.

LIFE ACCORDING TO NIKE – WE SAY GOODBYE

After several weeks of fighting a losing battle with cancer, sadly, on Friday February 5, 2010 I was forced to euthanise Nike. I came to the heartbreaking decision after all efforts to combat the cancer had failed and I felt that Nike was suffering. Slowly over the ten days prior, she had stopped doing all the things that made her "NIKE" and I could no longer control her pain. As she took her last breaths and passed away in my arms, I told her that I loved her and I thanked her for all the love she had given me, for all the times she forced me to slow down and snuggle with her, for having a great purr, for all the times she made me laugh, for all the funny stories she gave me to write about in the newsletter and for helping to make this building where I spend so much time feel more like a home than a place of business. I also told her that I would miss her, we would all miss her. As I write this, many weeks later, I still find myself covering my food so Nike won't get into it or looking behind me before I sit down, just in case Nike stole my seat and of course the tears still come quickly when I think of her. Although I know that someday we will be blessed with another little furry friend here at the clinic, there will never be another Nike. Goodbye old friend.

The bottom Line

An infected dog can have over 200 heartworms in the heart and adjoining blood vessels.

The drug companies that produce the various heartworm preventative medications will guarantee your dogs protection only if you use the medication correctly and have your dog's blood tested every year.

Most boarding facilities will require your dog to have had a Kennel Cough vaccine at least five days before admission.

Many puppy training facilities are also strongly recommending the Kennel Cough vaccine to their clients.

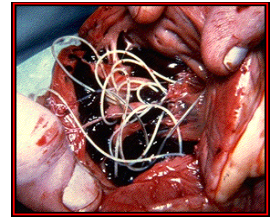
Leptospirosis is a Zoonotic disease; meaning people can become infected too.

Caution! Some flea products marketed in the pet stores to dogs are extremely toxic to cats. Always read the label carefully; better yet, ask us about choosing the safest products for your pets.

*** IMPORTANT SUMMERTIME REMINDERS ***

Heartworm Disease

Heartworm disease is caused by a large worm which can live in a dog's heart and adjoining blood vessels. Permanent and potentially fatal damage to the heart, lungs and liver can occur long before there are any visible signs. The heartworm is spread from one dog to another by the mosquito. Treatment is available but is often costly and difficult. A long recovery time can be expected and often irreparable damage to the heart, lungs and liver has already occurred.



Fortunately, prevention is so easy. Simply give your dog the preventative medication once a month from June through November. There are various types of heartworm medication available; some will also include prevention for intestinal worms and/or fleas. Blood testing your dog prior to starting the medication is an important part of prevention and is strongly recommended. Early detection of a heartworm infection before your dog gets sick will not only increase the success of the treatment and ensure a complete recovery, but will also help reduce the spread of the disease.

Leptospirosis Vaccine

Leptospirosis is a serious and sometimes fatal disease that can afflict dogs of all ages. Dogs most commonly become infected by drinking from rivers, streams, puddles or ponds that have become contaminated by the urine of other infected animals (raccoons, rats and skunks). Leptospirosis tends to attack the liver and kidneys causing a variety of symptoms including fever, nausea, lethargy, abdominal pain and increased urination. Many dogs afflicted with Leptospirosis will die from it. If your dog has access to wildlife, roams free, or drinks from water sources that may have become contaminated, he or she should be vaccinated against Leptospirosis this spring. We would be happy to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of vaccinating your dog against this disease.

Kennel Cough Vaccine

Bordetella bronchiseptica, better known as Kennel Cough, is a bacterial infection that causes tracheobronchitis. Affected dogs will exhibit a characteristic dry, harsh, hacking cough that can last up to 3 weeks. Some dogs will cough so hard that they gag afterward. Dogs are most commonly infected in kennels, pet stores, exhibitions, grooming salons and off leash parks where they are in close contact with other dogs. Although most dogs require only supportive care to recover, young, older or otherwise weaker dogs can develop a serious pneumonia that may require them to be hospitalized. Vaccination is recommended for dogs going to boarding kennels, puppy classes, grooming facilities or off leash parks. If your dog is not vaccinated against Kennel Cough and is likely to be exposed, please call us to schedule an appointment for a vaccination against *Bordetella bronchiseptica*.

Fleas



Both cats and dogs are at risk of becoming infested with fleas during our warm summer months. Fleas are extremely irritating to your pet. Flea bites can cause itchy skin rashes and even serious allergic reactions. Left untreated, just 10 adult fleas can multiply to over 250,000 fleas in only 30 days! Your pet can come into contact with fleas on walks, at the park, or even in your backyard. Those of you who have had fleas in the past know how difficult it is to get rid of them; prevention of flea infestations is much easier, cost effective and safe. Call us to start your pet on the safest and most effective flea prevention this spring.

The bottom Line

The actual number of heartworm positive pets in Ontario varies from year to year. A private laboratory that conducts heartworm tests for Ontario veterinarians reported 676 heartworm positive pets in 2008, up 280% from 2005. Clearly, pets are still very much at risk and pet owners should take the necessary precautions to protect them.

We are often asked by clients to refill a prescription for a pet that we have not seen in a few months. Often we decline this request, not to be difficult but because medically it is not in the pet's best interest and not legal for us to dispense medication without having a complete assessment of the pet's current condition.

TIPS:

Use flea and tick control products only on the animal specified by the product label; dog products for dogs, cat products for cats.

Apply only the amount indicated for the size and/or weight of the animal being treated.

THE COLLEGE OF VETERINARIANS OF ONTARIO WARNS VETERINARIANS

The College of Veterinarians of Ontario (CVO) regulates the practice of veterinary medicine in Ontario to protect the public interest. The following information statements were released to veterinarians:

*** HEARTWORM INFECTION IN "KATRINA" DOGS ***

The College has received concerns about a high rate of heartworm infection found in dogs which are being brought to Canada for adoption through rescue groups. Many of these dogs are reportedly being imported from Louisiana and Texas and put forward as animal refugees from Hurricane Katrina in 2005, and are being offered for adoption by rescue groups across the province, following a single negative heartworm test.

Heartworm infection has been suggested to be as high as 70% in these dogs, but a positive heartworm test result may not be seen for as long as 7 months post-adoption. There are fears that this influx

of heartworm positive dogs may lead to an increase in heartworm positives in Ontario's resident dog population.

The College reviewed several possible responses to this problem and after considering all of the issues, the Executive Committee suggests that the best course of action for veterinarians would be to strongly encourage new adoptive owners to accurately determine the background of their new dog and if from the at risk group to commit to an appropriate testing regime, as well as informing existing clients of the potential increased risk of heartworm infections.

*** VETERINARIANS AND "OVER THE COUNTER MEDICATIONS" ***

"The College continues to receive inquiries from veterinarians advising that members of the public are approaching them to purchase various products, particularly flea and heartworm products, over-the-counter. As well, a pharmaceutical company recently distributed information to veterinarians regarding the non-prescription status of some drug products, indicating that the drugs could be dispensed "over-the-counter." The College wishes to emphasize that there is no such thing as an over-the-counter drug

in veterinary practice in Ontario. The dispensing of any drug product to anyone with whom the veterinarian does not have a valid veterinarian-client-patient relationship (VCPR) is professional misconduct. While it may or may not be legal for a retail establishment to sell these drugs, veterinary clinics are not retail establishments; veterinarians provide professional services and are expected to conduct themselves accordingly."

HEALTH CANADA ADVISORY: 2009-60

"Health Canada Advises Consumers to Follow Label Directions on Flea and Tick Pest Control Products for Use on Cats and Dogs"

Current data from Health Canada's Pesticide Incident Reporting Program suggests there may be a potential for adverse reactions in cats and dogs from the use of flea and tick control products applied to the skin and sold in stores as pesticides. These products can be identified by a Pest Control Product or PCP Registration Number on the label. This advisory does not include flea and tick products sold as veterinary drugs, identified by a Drug Identification Number, or DIN, that are regulated by Health Canada. Health Canada is analyzing these veterinary drugs to determine if similar incidents have been reported.

While many people have used these products without any harmful effects on their pets, adverse reactions reported range from mild effects such as skin irritation to more serious effects such as seizures and in some cases death. As such, Health Canada is taking a precautionary approach and is advising pet owners to carefully read and follow all instructions noted on the product labels. Pet owners that are concerned with the use of flea and tick products should consult a veterinarian to ensure the product is appropriate and used safely."

Mountainview Animal Hospital

Dr. Stephanie Ewing BSc., DVM and Dr. Nancy Swift BSc., DVM

INVITES YOU TO OUR OPEN HOUSE!

SUNDAY MAY 2nd, 2010

FROM

1 PM TO 4 PM

To show our appreciation to our wonderful community, we are having an Open House.
Everyone is welcome to attend, including your furry friends.

Why should you come to our open house?

- 🐾 Meet our doctors and staff on a more personal level
- 🐾 Tour the hospital
- 🐾 Learn more about our various services and equipment
- 🐾 Play some games and test your knowledge about pet trivia
- 🐾 Learn more about important topics in pet health care
- 🐾 Watch a surgery at our hospital; we have recorded a surgery and will play the video at the open house
- 🐾 Enjoy food & refreshments, weather permitting we will have a barbeque

Concerned about children's safety around dogs?

Then come watch our 'BE A TREE' demonstration to teach children about safety around dogs.

333 Mountainview Road South, unit # 4

We are located in the South Georgetown Center, on the North East corner of Mountainview and Argyll roads
905-702-8822

*** * * MARK YOUR CALENDARS * * ***