

Foxridge Mews & News



FOX RIDGE OPEN HOUSE! **Saturday, May 18th** **11am-2pm**



Please join us at the clinic for our first open house!

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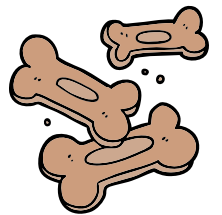
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- Clinic tours
- Refreshments for people and pets
- Education stations
- Fun games
- Free raffles and prizes
- Photos with your pets



No RSVP required. The whole family is invited!

NEW SIGN AND VIDEO AD

Check out the new clinic sign in front of the building! After a few delays, it was finally installed April 24th. We hope it makes it easier to remember where to turn in to the clinic!

If you live locally, you also may see a streaming video ad for Foxridge Veterinary Care, starting in May. One of the producers brought in his cat Chip for an appointment, and now Chip is a TV star!

PETS WITH ALLERGIES, PART 1

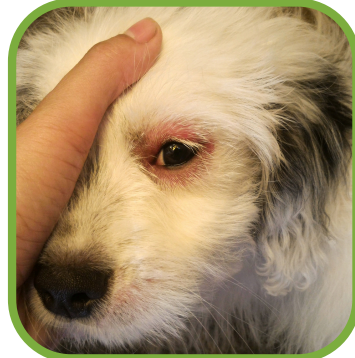
Do you have a dog or cat who is always chewing, licking, rubbing, “overgrooming,” and scratching? Do they get ear infections more than a few times a year? These are signs that your pet may be itchy. Persistent itching is often caused by allergies. Allergens are substances, most commonly proteins, that cause an inappropriate, exaggerated response by the body’s immune system. Some animals are likely genetically predisposed to having an overactive immune response. The incidence of allergies in pets appears to be increasing, just as it is in people. What’s more?! People with allergies are more likely to have pets with allergies, suggesting that living in the same environment is a big contributor.

The three most common causes of allergies in pets are **environmental** (either inhaled or via skin contact), **parasite-related** (most commonly fleas and mites), and **food**. Unlucky pets can also have more than one type of allergy.

Allergies can be very frustrating to manage, but there are several things that can be done to significantly improve your pet’s comfort. This month, we’ll talk about environmental allergies, and next month we’ll cover food and parasite allergies.

Environmental allergies = “atopic dermatitis”

- Allergens are either inhaled or absorbed via the skin
- This is the **most common** of the three causes of allergies, and unfortunately, the most difficult to manage. Diagnosis of this condition, called atopic dermatitis, requires ruling out the other two major causes (parasites and food) - it is a “diagnosis of exclusion.”
- Signs often start young (<3 years old) but can start at any age!
- Environmental allergens include pollen, weeds, grasses, trees, dust mites, perfumes, fabrics, pesticides, household cleaning products, molds, and medications.
- The exact allergen(s) are often difficult to pinpoint. Hair and saliva tests are not shown to be accurate to diagnose environmental allergies - both non-allergic and allergic pets may be “positive.” Dermal (skin) testing, done by a veterinary dermatologist, and blood testing are the most helpful, but only after ruling out food and parasites.
- Some breeds of dogs are more commonly affected by environmental allergies: Chinese Shar-Peis, Golden Retrievers, Dalmatians, Boxers, Boston Terriers, Labrador Retrievers, Lhasa Apsos, Shih Tzus, and West Highland White Terriers



Excessive licking or scratching, to the point that the skin becomes raw, can be a sign of allergies. Dr. Allen’s cat, Nick (left two pictures), is an extreme case. He has even been referenced at national veterinary conferences! Despite receiving the best, multi-modal treatment, he still has flares.

Management

Allergies can be very frustrating to manage, as there is no one treatment regimen that works for all pets, and we likely won't be able to completely eliminate the itch. However, there are several things that can be done to make a huge difference in your pet's comfort. Because atopic dermatitis is multifaceted, treatments should be tailored to the individual, and combining interventions will improve the outcome.

- **Bathing** - Frequent bathing can help wash off allergens and improve skin health by providing moisture, soothing irritation, and reducing the skin's bacterial load. It is imperative to use a non-irritating shampoo formulated for pets - Douxo Calm, Douxo Pyo, or MiconHex+Triz are shampoos we recommend and stock in the clinic. Some of these products are available in "mousse" or spray forms, to make it more convenient to apply them.



- **Wiping paws** - For dogs or cats that go outdoors, wiping their paws can help reduce the amount of time their skin is in contact with pollens, road salt, or lawn chemicals. Options include medicated wipes (such as MiconHex+Triz), unscented baby wipes, or a "MudBuster" paw washer for dogs.



- **Reducing environmental allergens** - Avoid using scented products in your home: candles, Febreze, household cleaners, laundry detergent, and wall plug-ins all emit potentially allergenic fragrance molecules. Use unscented cat litter - cats prefer fragrance-free litter even if not allergic. Using a vacuum with a HEPA filter, as well as an air purifier, can also reduce environmental allergens.



- **Supplements/diets** - Feeding diets formulated to promote skin health, through higher levels of fatty acids and antioxidants, or using an Omega-3 fish oil supplement may help.



- **Stay off the lawn** - Avoid letting pets walk in grass treated with pesticides and after fertilizer application. Limiting the amount of time your pet lays on the grass may also reduce signs.

- **OTC medications** - Benadryl (diphenhydramine) is commonly given and generally safe for dogs and cats; Zyrtec (cetirizine) has been shown to be more effective than Benadryl, and only has to be given once per day. Benadryl and Zyrtec are antihistamines, and neither are as effective in pets as they are in people. They may help for mild cases, or in addition to other treatments.
- **Rx medications** - The most effective medications for relieving itch in pets include corticosteroids (such as prednisone), daily Apoquel tablets, Cytopoint injections every 4-8 weeks, or Atopica (cyclosporine liquid or capsules). Apoquel and Cytopoint are most often recommended due to excellent safety and minimal side effects.



- **Immunotherapy** - This is the only treatment, other than allergen avoidance, that addresses the root cause of the problem. An injectable or oral medication is formulated specifically for your pet, based on a blood or skin test. Small doses are given over time to desensitize your pet's immune system to the allergen. This process can take several months to a year to see the full benefit, but results can be worth the wait. Immunotherapy is often less expensive in the long term than other medications that only treat the symptoms.



Environmental allergies may be seasonal - usually being worse in the spring through fall. Therefore, some of these treatments may be able to be discontinued in the winter.

This is just a quick overview - please contact us so that we can tailor a plan to your pet!

4K CLASS VISIT

Students from the Little Red Preschool in Middleton visited the clinic for a tour on April 2nd. Dr. Allen, technician Anna, and assistant Taylor showed the kids some cool x-rays, walked through how we examine pets, and talked about different pet foods.

If you would like to arrange to have your group tour the clinic, please contact us!



GET TO KNOW THE STAFF: TAYLOR

Taylor joined the clinic in August of 2022 as a veterinary assistant, while it was still Janssen Clinic for Animals. She attended UW-Madison as an undergraduate, where she earned a Bachelor's degree in Biology. After graduating in 2021, she took some time to travel through Michigan's Upper Peninsula and the east coast before returning to Wisconsin. She grew up near the Wisconsin/Upper Peninsula border (Marinette/Menominee area).



Taylor enjoys seeing all the types of pets that come into the clinic and is excited to learn more about veterinary medicine. In her free time, she enjoys traveling Wisconsin for car events and visiting family. When not traveling, she's often doing DIY projects or spending time with her boyfriend and their two dogs, Clover (a springer spaniel mix) and Karma (a hound mix).

Taylor also manages Foxridge Veterinary Care's social media - make sure to follow us for photos and tidbits!



Connect with us!

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