

Foxridge Mews & News



Thanks to all who attended our open house!

It was great to see everyone that was able to attend our May 18th open house! We hope you enjoyed the chance to go "behind the scenes" and to win prizes.

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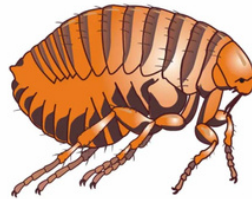


Evening Appointments

Is it hard to find time during the work day to get your pet into the vet? We hear you! Last month, we added Monday evening appointments with Dr. Perkins. Since they were so popular, we are now adding Thursday evening appointments with Dr. Allen. The clinic will be open until 8pm on both Mondays and Thursdays.

PETS WITH ALLERGIES, PART 2

Last month we talked about environmental allergies, the most common of the 3 main causes of allergies in pets. This month we cover the other two: food and parasite/pest allergies.



Parasite-related allergies

- Flea saliva can be highly allergenic. Other parasites, such as mites, can also cause allergies. Just one bite can set off a reaction!
- Just because you don't see fleas or other parasites, doesn't mean they aren't there. Cats are fastidious groomers and you may not see the adults. Thick coats hide tiny parasites.
- Fleas aren't just a warm-weather issue. Fleas thrive indoors during the winter.
- A study found that cases of flea allergy dermatitis increased in dogs by 12.5%, and increased in cats by 67.3%, from 2008 to 2018 (Banfield State of Pet Health Report 2018).

How we can manage parasite-related allergies:

- Prevention is key! All pets, but especially allergic pets, should receive year-round flea and tick preventatives, as it can prevent signs of allergies in those with flea allergy dermatitis (FAD) and reduce the aggravation of other allergies. There are several recommended options, including monthly oral medications, monthly topical medications, every 3 month topical or oral medications, and a collar that lasts up to 8 months. The over-the-counter topicals are not as effective as they once were, with parasites developing resistance.
- For dogs, we generally recommend oral monthly Simparica Trio (which also provides heartworm prevention) or oral tri-monthly Bravecto.



- For cats, monthly topical Revolution Plus (which also provides heartworm prevention), monthly topical NexGard Plus (also provides heartworm and tapeworm prevention), or oral monthly Credelio are our go-tos.



- Talk to your vet to discuss your pet's lifestyle and risk level to determine the best prevention plan.
- All pets, even those that stay only indoors, are at risk. It is much easier to prevent a problem than eliminate a flea infestation once it has been established. Fleas can be brought into the house via clothing or hitching a ride on another pet's coat. Wildlife in the yard can spread fleas as well.
- Pets with parasite allergies may still experience occasional flares, for example, if bitten by a flea before the preventative has had time to work. Use of anti-itch medications (refer to last month's newsletter) can help make your pet more comfortable. Immunotherapy may also be an option, especially if your pet is young or middle-aged.
- If your home becomes infested with fleas, intensive eradication needs to be undertaken to eliminate them. It is much easier to prevent fleas from establishing themselves in the first place by using preventatives!



Food allergies

- While not as common as pet food companies may make you think (1-2% of all dogs, and <1% of all cats; ~1/4 of all itchy dogs and ~1/5 of all itchy cats), food allergies can cause the same signs as environmental and flea allergies.
- Grains are NOT the most common cause of food allergy - in both dogs and cats, beef is the most commonly reported food allergen.
 - For dogs, the most common food allergens reported in studies are beef, dairy products, chicken, wheat, and lamb.



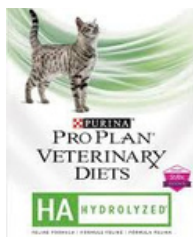
- For cats, the most commonly reported food allergens are beef, fish, and chicken.



- About a quarter of pets may also have GI signs, such as vomiting, diarrhea, soft stool, excessive flatulence, and/or straining
- Unlike environmental allergies, food allergy can develop at ANY age - dogs have been as old as 13 and cats as old as 16 when they developed food allergies.
- Just because a pet may have been eating the same food for years doesn't mean they can't develop an allergy to it. In fact, this is usually the case.
- Some breeds of dogs may be predisposed: German Shepherds, Labrador Retrievers, French Bulldogs, and West Highland White Terriers.
- Dogs with food allergies are 6 times more likely to develop skin infections, and cats with food allergies are 15 times more likely to develop skin infections.

How we can manage food allergy:

- Diagnosis requires a strict elimination diet trial for 2-3 months. Your pet will ONLY be able to eat this diet, in order to determine if the allergy symptoms improve. This can be tough (no treats, chews, human food, or even flavored medications), but is well worth the effort if it makes your pet more comfortable.
- The best options for a diet trial include a prescription hydrolyzed diet, prescription “novel protein” diet, or a carefully balanced home-prepared diet. We prefer the hydrolyzed diets, as they are simple, balanced, and the most likely to not contain any allergenic proteins. Over the counter diets, even if they are marketed as being “limited-ingredient” or “sensitive skin and stomach” have been shown in studies to contain traces of other ingredients not listed on the labels. While this is no big deal for a non-allergic pet, it can set off symptoms in an allergic pet.



- Your pet may stay on this diet long-term, or you may gradually add in other foods to see if the allergies flare. If signs resolve, doing a “diet challenge” by returning to the old diet and seeing if signs return, is the best proof of a food allergy. It is not always possible to determine exactly what food or foods are the cause.
- Some pets may also need to also use anti-itch medications (refer to last month’s newsletter) if they have “dietary indiscretion” that results in a flare. The frequency of needing these medications will be greatly reduced, or even eliminated, by sticking to a suitable diet.

TRIVIA

1. How many dogs survived the sinking of the Titanic?
2. How many dogs in the US are estimated to be the primary beneficiary of their owner’s will?
3. How many rows of whiskers do cats have?
4. What mammal has the most flexible spine?
5. Why do dogs sometimes kick backward after they go to the bathroom?

Answers below!



Trivia answers:
1. Three: two Pomeranians and a Pekingese (named Sun Yat Sen) boarded life boats with their owners.
2. About 1 million dogs are estimated to be the primary beneficiaries in their owners’ wills.
3. Cats have four rows of whiskers, and the top two rows can be moved independently of the bottom two rows.
4. The cat is the mammal with the most flexible spine.
5. Dogs kick backward after they go to the bathroom to mark their territory using the scent glands in their feet, not to cover it up.

CASE STUDY: SUPER'S SAGA

Super, an 11 year old cat, had a very ouchy eye. After coming in from outside one day, his owner noted him squinting his left eye and that there was yellow discharge from it. No one saw the injury happen, but it was suspected Super had gotten in a kitty quarrel that resulted in a scratch to his eye.

When Dr. Perkins examined Super, she noted the eyeball had ruptured, and recommended enucleation (removal of the eye), given that the eye was not longer providing sight and was just going to be a continual source of pain for poor Super. He was given pain medications and surgery was scheduled for the next day.

Under anesthesia, Super's left eye was removed. He did very well after surgery, and had his stitches removed two weeks later. He adjusted to one-eyed life easily, and he will make a great pirate for Halloween!

Unfortunately, Super's saga is not uncommon. Dogs and cats do not always take good care of their eyes. Adventurous pets can get burdocks, fish hooks, or sticks in their eyes, or, as was suspected with Super, skirmishes can result in eye trauma. In some cases, the eye is able to be saved if only the surface is scratched, but in other cases, or if a minor injury goes untreated too long, the best option is to remove the eye. Due to the risk of eye injuries becoming serious quickly, and the fact that eye disease can be very painful, we always recommend having it checked out as soon as possible!

Before surgery



Two weeks after surgery



Connect with us!

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