



Monroe Pet Press



Published Quarterly by the MONROE ANIMAL HOSPITAL
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Volume 2, Edition 2 - June 2009

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Atopy in Pets

Many pet owners are personally familiar with allergic signs. It is not uncommon for people to have wheezing and sneezing due to pollen, ragweed, mold, dust or other items.

Much like humans, our canine and feline patients can also be affected by airborne allergens or atopy. Unlike people, most pets with allergies do not exhibit respiratory signs. Rather they exhibit skin problems such as licking, biting, and/or scratching at themselves. This can range from very slight to bordering on the point of self-mutilation. Since the allergen is usually only present during part of the year, a seasonal component is very common.



Most dogs that develop atopy will do so between one and five years of age. Certain breeds are more prone to atopy, including Golden Retrievers,



West Highland Terriers, Bichons, and Shar Peis.

Atopy in dogs is usually a diagnosis of exclusion. Other conditions such as mange, food allergies, and flea allergies need to be treated for first. If no response is seen, then management of atopy is undertaken.

The mainstay for rapid control of atopy are glucocorticoids such as prednisolone and dexamethasone. While very effective for short-term control of dogs with dermatologic signs, they are not safe for continued long-term use as they can affect the adrenal glands, suppress immunity, cause high blood pressure, and muscle wasting. Often, when used, a decreasing dose schedule is utilized to minimize adverse effects when transitioning off the medication. For dogs with localized signs one option is a topical spray called Genesis. The steroid in this drug is not systemically absorbed and is a good option for dogs who scratch and bite in only a few places (i.e the groin, feet, etc.)

Approximately 50% of dogs and 75% of cats with atopy can be controlled with antihistamines. These are safe for

long-term use but are not uniformly effective in all patients. In dogs there is about a 25% response rate per individual antihistamine, and it does not matter whether a prescription, generic or over-the counter antihistamine is utilized. Commonly used antihistamines include clemastine (Tavist), chlorpheniramine (Chlortrimeton) diphenhydramine (Benadryl), and Doxepin. Antihistamines often work better when combined with an omega 3/6 fatty acid supplement, and they are often used together concurrently.

In dogs where antihistamines do not control allergic signs but steroids do, a newer option is a drug called Atopica. This medication which contains the ingredient cyclosporine suppresses the allergic reaction without the long-term risks of steroids. Since it is more expensive, it is often not used as an initial therapy, but often the dose can be lowered after a few months to reduce costs.

Just like people, some pets are given allergy injections. These are usually reserved for cases that have not responded to medical therapy. Often skin or blood tests are done prior to determine what your pet is allergic to and in order to formulate the allergy injections.

While inhalant allergies can cause a great deal of discomfort to pets, newer therapies offer the promise of relief and comfort to many patients.

Rabies Update

Within the last month, a wild skunk and wild raccoon were diagnosed with Rabies in Monroe Township.

David A. Papi, Director of the Middlesex County Public Health Department stated that they "continue to monitor rabies cases within the County. Residents should report wild animals showing signs of unusual behavior to their local Animal Control Officer. Additionally, it is recommended that residents should avoid contact with wild animals and immediately report any bites from wild or domestic animals to your local health department and consult a physician as soon as possible. Finally, be sure that all family pets are up to date on their rabies vaccinations and licenses."

Laparoscopic Surgery

In recent years advances in human medicine have led to surgery being increasingly performed less invasively through small openings in the chest or abdomen. In the last few years this option has started to become available for our animal patients as well.

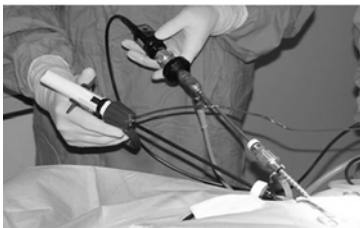
Utilizing special equipment and video cameras tiny openings can be made to allow access to body cavities. Surgical procedures that previously required larger surgical incisions can now be performed less invasively and with a quicker recovery time and less patient discomfort. The typical incisions made for laparoscopic surgery are approximately ½ inch in size.

Surgical procedures that laparoscopy can be performed on in veterinary patients currently include spaying, liver biopsy, and prophylactic gastropexy.

Typically spay procedures in dogs are performed to remove the ovaries and uterus, preventing pregnancy and reducing risk of breast cancer. When performed conventionally, surgical incisions can be anywhere from 1 inch to 6 or more inches in size.

Liver biopsies in dogs and cats are indicated if acute or chronic liver disease is present in order to determine the cause and best course of treatment. Biopsies can be performed through traditional surgery, via ultrasound guidance, or laparoscopically. Surgery and laparoscopy allow direct visualization of the liver, which has been shown in studies to result in more representative biopsy specimens

Prophylactic gastropexy is a surgical procedure that can prevent stomach twisting or “bloat” a potentially fatal condition that can occur in large deep-chested breed dogs such as Dobermans, German Shepards, Saint Bernards, etc. This procedure can be performed at any time, but is often performed at the time of spaying or neutering.



At the Monroe Animal Hospital, we have the services available of Dr. Wendy Ross, a Board Certified Veterinary Surgeon. She can perform the procedures above, as well as other

specialized orthopedic and soft-tissue surgeries at our hospital if requested.

New Flea and Tick Preventative

We are now recommending and carrying Vectra 3D for flea and tick prevention in dogs. This product contains a

distinctive triple-action formula against fleas, ticks, mosquitoes, lice, mites and sand flies. It has multiple features including:

- Kills adult fleas in 6 hours.
- Prevents development of all immature flea stages for one month: eggs, larvae and pupae.
- Repels and kills four species of ticks (*Rhipicephalus* spp, *Dermacentor variabilis*, *Ixodes* spp, *Amblyomma* spp).
- Repels and kills three species of mosquitoes (*Culex* spp, *Ochlerotatus* spp, *Aedes* spp).
- Repels and kills biting and sucking lice.
- Repels and kills mites (*Cheyletiella*).
- Repels and kills sand flies.
- Remains effective after bathing and swimming.
- Provides one month of protection.



Vectra is applied in a similar way to other topical preventatives like Frontline. It is packaged in a unique easy to open container and has an expanded coverage compared to Frontline.

Microchipping and Your Pet

Accidents can happen and unfortunately, many animals that get separated from their owners are not reunited. One simple thing that can be done to help a pet be placed back with their caregivers is microchipping.

A microchip is an identification device that is injected in the skin above the shoulder blades region. Each chip has a unique identification code that can be viewed with a special microchip reader. Most shelters and veterinary hospitals have this equipment, and universal scanners that can read the codes of multiple different brands are available.

Once a pet is microchipped, the owner simply registers the chip with the company who produced the device. A database is maintained with contact information so you can be informed if your pet is ever found.

There have been well publicized stories in the media about dogs and cats who have been returned to their family's years after being lost. Microchips can provide valuable insurance for your pet in the event of such a circumstance.