

# Allergy Testing Your Pet





## ALLERGY TESTING YOUR PET

### WHY ALLERGY TEST?

If your pet has been suffering with symptoms such as itchy reddened skin, recurrent skin or ear infections and fur loss, it is possible they may be suffering with allergies.

Having ruled out other causes of these symptoms, such as fleas and other skin parasites, your vet may recommend doing an allergy test.

Allergy testing is an effective way of finding out exactly which environmental allergens your pet may be allergic to.

By pinpointing the allergens that trigger your pet's symptoms, a suitable treatment plan can be implemented to help reduce the symptoms and prevent future flare-ups.



### WHAT DOES ALLERGY TESTING SHOW?

Allergy testing will identify sensitivities to a variety of environmental allergens. These include both seasonal and non-seasonal allergens such as:



**Flower  
Pollen**



**Weed  
Pollen**



**Tree  
Pollen**



**Moulds**



**Fleas**



**Mites**



**Epithelia**



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### BENEFITS OF ALLERGY TESTING

Once the allergens responsible for your pet's symptoms have been identified, your vet will be better able to tailor a suitable treatment plan based on when your pet is likely to be symptomatic. For example, if your pet has an allergy to flower pollen, you can predict when your pet's symptoms will flare up and plan treatment for that period. This may involve a short course of medication and topical therapy to minimise symptoms during the flower pollen season.

Allergy testing may show your pet is allergic to both non-seasonal allergens like dust as well as seasonal allergens like pollen. In these cases your pet may be symptomatic for much of the year, in which case a different treatment plan may be advisable.



### USING ALLERGY TESTING TO TAILOR TREATMENT

There are different treatments that can help manage the symptoms of allergy and often a multi-modal approach is recommended to manage these symptoms. Allergy testing will be able to help determine which treatments are appropriate. It will also help determine for how long your pet may need that treatment throughout the year. Treatments that can be recommended based on allergy testing include:



**Allergen Specific Immunotherapy**



**Itch blocking medications**



**Skin shampoos, foams, wipes**



**Environmental Sprays**



**Ear Cleaners**



**Fatty Acids**



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### ALLERGEN AVOIDANCE

Another key benefit of allergy testing is that it can help you create allergen avoidance plans that help reduce your pet's exposure to the allergens they are sensitive to. For example, if the allergy test proves a positive sensitivity to house dust, it may be sensible to increase the frequency of vacuuming and bed washing. Your pet may also benefit from environmental sprays that reduce dust exposure. More frequent bathing can also help wash allergens off of the coat.

If your pet is shown to have allergies to pollen you may be able to alter walking routes to avoid the trees and plants that trigger a reaction. You can plan the timing of walks based on pollen count and can rinse their paws and coats after walks with easy-to-use foams and wipes.



### ALLERGY TESTING CAN HELP REDUCE LONG-TERM COSTS

Managing a pet with allergies is often life-long and treatment can be expensive. However, allergy testing may help reduce the long-term costs involved in managing an allergic pet.

Without knowing what exactly your pet is allergic to, you will not know when their symptoms are likely to start or how long they will last, especially if they are only allergic to seasonal allergens like pollen. As a result, expensive medications may be given for longer than they need to be as many can be reduced or withdrawn when allergens are not in season.

Allergy testing will also give you the option of doing Allergen Specific Immunotherapy (ASIT) which is considered the gold standard treatment for allergy. This involves an initial one off cost for a 10-month course of treatment that desensitises your pet to the allergens that trigger the allergic symptoms. ASIT is a lifelong treatment so there is a yearly one-off cost for each new vaccine but the majority of patients respond positively and as a result the dependence on other medications becomes less, saving you money over the course of your pet's life.

Allergen avoidance strategies which can be better implemented after doing an allergy test will also help reduce costs long term as they may help minimise symptoms and reduce flare-ups that require treatment. Many products that help with reducing exposure to allergens such as shampoos, foams, wipes and environmental sprays are lower cost and last months, so the cost is spread out.

Moreover, allergy testing allows you to better predict when your pet will likely get symptom flare-ups so you can financially plan for times of the year when treatment costs may rise.



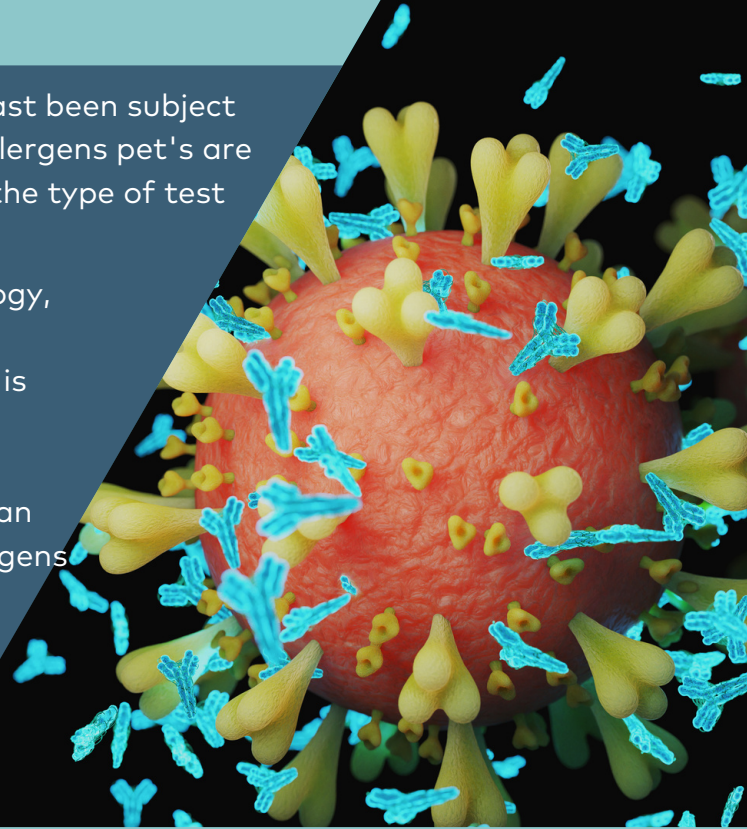
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### IS ALLERGY TESTING RELIABLE?

Allergy testing techniques and methods have in the past been subject to criticism that they do not accurately show which allergens pet's are allergic to. How reliable an allergy test is depends on the type of test done.

Thanks to recent updates in allergy testing methodology, allergy serum testing which involves looking for IgE against environmental allergens in the animals blood, is now recognised as being very reliable. The latest test technology can show with a high degree of accuracy exactly which allergens are responsible for triggering an allergic response. Intradermal skin testing where allergens are injected into the skin, is also a reliable method undertaken by some vets.

Other forms of allergy test such as saliva or hair tests are proven to be unreliable and should not be undertaken.



### ALLERGY TESTING FOR FOOD ALLERGY

Allergic symptoms in pets may also be caused by sensitivity to certain foods. This is called food allergy and it is important to rule out food allergy when working-up the cause of your pet's symptoms.

It is commonly accepted that allergy testing cannot be done to diagnose food allergy and the only way to prove a food allergy is to do an elimination food trial. This involves feeding your pet a novel protein source for 8-12 weeks and seeing if the symptoms improve.

If symptoms resolve or improve then food allergy can be diagnosed. If they don't then it is likely your pet is not food allergic or if they partially improve it indicates that your pet may also suffer from environmental allergies which they can then be tested for.

The value of serum testing for food allergens is that it can either help determine which foods you can provoke the animal with to look for clinical signs, or to help choose a suitable diet for use during the elimination food trial.





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### FURTHER RESOURCES

For more information on allergens, allergen avoidance and food trials, please scan the QR code or visit:

<https://go.nextmune.com/allergytesting>



### UNDERSTANDING ALLERGY & ALLERGY MANAGEMENT

For more information on allergy including what causes it, how to diagnose and treat it as well as lots of other useful information please scan the QR code or visit:

<https://go.nextmune.com/theallergyjourney>

