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## Dealing With A Dog Food Allergy?

By **Blake Kritzberg**

Just as humans allergies can show up as a sneeze or rash, your dog's allergies can manifest as

itchiness — or even ear infections. In fact, if your dog's allergic to his food, it can cause him to scratch himself constantly, even with no obvious parasite problem.

Dog allergies rarely get solved with medicine, so the best we can do for our four-footed friends is focus on prevention. Providing the right type of food is essential to stopping your dog's scratching habit.

Many people like to share their food with their dogs or let them help "clean up" the kitchen after a meal. Little do they know, their dogs just may not be able to take the tasty food we love so much, and some breeds (like the greyhound) are extremely sensitive. Even common foods like cheese, beef sausage and tuna may cause allergic reactions in some dogs. So it's best to let dogs enjoy dog food and not human food, even though they clearly adore and want what we're eating!

### Narrowing Down the Problem

To determine the exact ingredients your dog is allergic to, try an elimination diet. Although powerful, it also requires patience. In fact, the elimination diet can call for eliminating specific food for up to 12 weeks before you'll notice the effects. And if you still haven't found the right (and wrong) ingredients, you'll have to repeat the process all over again.

So is there an alternative to the lengthy elimination diet? Yes — give your dog a brand or type of food he's never eaten before. But simply changing to a new brand of dog food might not be enough to eliminate his food allergies, since many brands contain similar ingredients. Instead, study the existing ingredients your dog is eating to determine which types of protein source he hasn't been exposed to.

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Then, hunt for a dog food that doesn't contain any of the ingredients you saw listed. For example, there are many brands of dog food that contains unusual protein sources such as rabbit or venison — great for testing allergic reactions to other, more common proteins.

Perhaps the best way for you to get control of dog's allergies is to whip up your own dog food. That way, you'll know exactly what he's getting and what he isn't — something that's extremely hard to tell from reading the back of a dog food bag. Making your own food is especially helpful in elimination diets. To start, combine a portion of rice with baby food and lamb — so long as your dog isn't already eating lamb and possibly displaying a reaction to it.

Dog food allergies are a special condition that can be frustrating and take patience to solve. Since allergic reactions don't disappear overnight, you'll need lots of time and thoughtfulness to help your dog overcome this problem — but his goofy smile and those scratch-free days ahead will probably make it all worth it.

Blake Kritzberg is proprietor of Poodle—oo: Fashion for Toy Dogs. Stop by for toy dog couture and home decor, free toy dog postcards and the Toy Dog Blog.

<http://www.poodle—oo.com/>

## **Dealing With Pet Allergies**

**By A. Wilmot**

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It is Winter time again, a time of the year when pets and humans are very vulnerable to each other. As this is obviously the chilliest time of the year, animals are much more likely to be cooped up inside the house with us. All of the windows and doors are closed to the world and the heat is blasting around the clock.

These are exactly the conditions which make our winter homes playgrounds for certain allergens. Our pets are extremely vulnerable to the dust in the carpet, the mold inside the walls of your old house and other pets. But warm moist times of the year are high allergy times as well. Allergies are simply the most common conditions affecting cats and according to Kansas

State University, 15% of dogs suffer from common allergies like pollen and house dust. An allergic reaction is the work of an overactive immune system. It is when an animal responds abnormally to a seemingly everyday substance such as grass or general food ingredients.

Of the different kinds of allergies, contact allergies are the least common in cats and dogs. An Example of a contact allergen is a flea collar. Grass and various kinds of bedding such as wool are also examples. An Inhalant Allergy is the most common allergy for cats and is also prevalent in dogs.

This particular kind of allergy is caused by the hypersensitivity of the immune system to environmental substances. A Flea Allergy is the single most common dog allergy but is also common cats. The normal dog or cat suffers only somewhat minor irritation in lieu of a flea bite with minimal itching.

A food allergy is also somewhat common in pets. Cats often become allergic to their most common protein such as tuna. Dogs can be allergic to proteins like chicken and beef. When it comes to

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allergies, like most things it's a matter of controlling, not curing. Once an animal's body becomes hypersensitive to certain things, it is then eternally vulnerable to those things. Regarding treatment of allergies, the most common treatments are topical products like shampoos or antihistamines. There are also certain supplements that you can give to your pets to help support the insides of their bodies, which to an extent determine the condition of the outside. For additional Information visit

Dog Supplements from Life's Abundance

for help with your dog

A. Wilmot is a writer/researcher. For more info. go to <http://www.premium-cat-food.com/>

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