

Types of Allergens



INHALANT ALLERGENS:

Your pet can be allergic to the same inhalant allergens that may cause you to suffer. These include pollens, moulds and house dust mites.

CONTACT ALLERGENS:

It is thought that up to 70% of pet allergy exposure is by contact with the skin, thus making it the leading source of irritation and allergy to a substance.

Animals with an allergic disease may have small cracks, invisible to the naked eye, on the surface of their skin. When an affected pet comes into contact with pollens in the environment, allergens gain entry through these small openings. Because our pets aren't bathed daily, offending allergens can remain on the skin for days or weeks at a time, causing continued irritation, itching and other symptoms.

FLEA ALLERGENS:

One of the most common types of allergens in both dogs and cats is flea allergy. This allergic reaction is caused by the saliva of the flea and can often lead to severe hair loss, itching and secondary skin infections.

FOOD ALLERGENS:

Food allergy is the most likely cause of allergy symptoms in animals less than 1 year of age. Food allergies also manifest themselves with ear inflammation/infection (which can lead to head shaking), feet licking and chewing, face rubbing and itchy skin.

In some cases, dietary change alone may not be enough to bring your pet below symptom level. Some suggest that this lack of improvement may indicate the test results are not accurate as they should be. Keeping in mind that allergies are cumulative, dietary changes alone may not be enough to bring your pet below symptom level because there are still more allergens reacting outside of the foods, that dietary change alone cannot address.

Indoor Allergens (that can affect your pet)

KAPOK:

is typically found in furniture upholstery, pillows and in stuffed animals. In these cases, isolation of the patient from such areas or removal of those items from the home are indicated.

ORRIS ROOT:

(apparently a corruption of iris root) are the rhizomes of three species of Iris. They are often used as a fixative in potpourri to enhance colour and fragrance as well as certain cosmetics and can be recognised by their violet scented fragrance.

PYRETHRUM:

The Pyrethrin class of insecticides was originally formulated from plants of the composite family, which includes Daisies and Chrysanthemums. Pyrethrum refers to both the crude plant extract and marketed formulation of insecticide.

JUTE:

is a type of plant fibre used to make common items such as rope, twine, chair coverings, curtains, sacks, hessian cloth, carpets and even the backing used in linoleum.

HOUSE DUST:

The allergies within dust mite are distributed through the waste products of the dust mite. The common areas in which dust mites can be found are carpets, bare floors, furniture upholstery, pillows, mattresses, box springs, stuffed animals, books and in high humidity and damp areas. Many of these are difficult to isolate from and therefore maximum amount of cleaning is advocated where they occur in carpets, vacuuming regularly with special hepa filter bags is indicated. Bare floors should be mopped and dusted at least 3 times a week.

COCKROACH:

The allergen includes secretions and faeces from the cockroach. The allergen is widely distributed in house dust and concentrations are highest in kitchen areas. However, it is detectable throughout the house. They generally live in moist and shady areas. They prefer temperatures around 84°F and do not tolerate cold. Commonly, they are found in landscape areas and are abundant in yards, in palm trees and hollow trees. Cockroaches are also common in basements, sewers, crawl spaces, cracks and crevices in porches and foundations. Typically, cockroaches will move indoors in rainy or cold climates and populations will increase visibly during those times. They may enter the house via sewer connections, under doors, around utility pipes and through air ducts.

Mould Allergens (that can affect your pet)

CLADOSPORIUM:

Grows on plants, leather, rubber, cloth, paper and wood. One of the most common causes of mould allergy.

ASPERGILLUS:

Found in soil, damp hay, on grain and on fruit.

PHOMA:

Grows on magazines, books and other paper products.

PENNICILLIUM

Grows on fruits, breads and cheese. A mutant form of the penicillium mould is used in the manufacture of penicillin. Allergy to penicillium spores however, should not be confused with allergy to penicillin as a medication.

ALTERNARIA:

Often found growing on carpets, textiles and horizontal surfaces such as window frames. Also found in soil, seeds and plants as well as in water damaged buildings.

HELMINTHOSPORIUM:

Best known as parasites of cereals and grasses. Frequently they are isolated from grains, grasses, sugar cane, soil and textiles.

RHIZOPUS:

Typically found in childrens sand boxes, in clusters of pine needles and leaves, sweet potato, strawberries, stewed fruit and amongst the nest, feathers and droppings of wild birds.

CURVULARIA:

May cause leaf spots and seedling blight. Also seen on castor beans, cotton, rice, barley, wheat and corn.

CANDIDA ALBICANS:

Very seldomly found as an airborne mould spore. They are common in soil, organic debris and in humans as a saprophyte in the nasal pharynx and faeces.

FUSARIUM:

Widely distributed on numerous grasses and other plants and is a common soil fungus. Major parasites of rice, sugar cane, sorghum and maize grains. Also occurs regularly on fruit and vegetables.

PULLALARIA:

This is the dominant fungus found on leaves. It also grows in the surface layers of many types of soils and is most prevalent following treatment of the soil with nitrogen. It has also been isolated from grasses, seeds, honeycomb, nests and feathers of living birds, frozen fruit cake, leather, cotton fabrics and concrete surfaces.

NIGROSPORA:

Most commonly found as a plant parasite.

SMUTS:

Most often found on corn, grasses, weeds, flowering plants and other fungi. Usually the spores are disseminated by wind.

STEMPHYLIUM:

Isolated from dead plants and cellulose material.

MOULD ALLERGENS INFORMATION:

Moulds can be found almost anywhere, and all moulds produce airborne spores. Typically, their growth is stimulated by warmth and increases in humidity. They tend, therefore, to be most prevalent during hot humid months. Basements, compost piles, cut grass, barns and wooded areas are very typical spots for finding large populations of moulds. In an older bathroom, a hot shower will also temporarily increase the mould allergy population. Typically, moulds will and can be found in almost any and every home and office environment, both indoor and outdoor. The important point about a mould allergy is that it is often related to an overgrowth of Candida; this yeast causes reactivity to many other yeasts and mould fungi. Once a Candida allergy is triggered, the patient may experience allergies to more common moulds.

