

Cats Can Suffer Summer Allergies, Too

The ASPCA describes how common allergies can cause itching and scratching in cats and dogs, and what owners can do to help alleviate symptoms.

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Summer brings warm weather and, with it, conditions that can cause allergies to flare up. The ASPCA reminds pet owners that cats and dogs can suffer from allergies, too.

Allergies occur when a cat's immune system reacts abnormally to a common substance. Symptoms your cat might show include licking and scratching, which may lead to hair loss and skin irritation. Some cats also might also experience frequent skin and ear infections.

Skin disorders are one of the most common reasons owners bring their pets to the vet, said Jeanne Budgin, veterinary dermatologist at the ASPCA Bergh Memorial Animal Hospital. "Many skin disorders are the result of allergies," she said. "It's extremely important for the comfort and health of your pet to determine the source of the allergy and treat it appropriately."

Common causes of allergies in cats and dogs include: Flea allergies. This is the most common form of allergy in cats and dogs. Foods. While symptoms are usually skin-related, other symptoms include vomiting and diarrhea. Molds, pollens and house dust mites. These allergens can cause a condition called "atopy," resulting in rashes that cause itching. Tree pollens and grasses. Tree pollens cause most allergy symptoms, according to the ASPCA.

If you believe your cat is suffering from allergies, ask your veterinarian about having your pet tested and treated.