

A New Way To Deliver Allergy Immunotherapy To Your Dog

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Allergy testing and immunotherapy have been part of the treatment protocol for atopic dogs for many years. Currently both intradermal testing (by veterinary dermatologists) or serum testing can be used to select environmental allergens for immunotherapy. As long as patients are managed well, either method of testing can be effective. Traditionally, immunotherapy has been given by subcutaneous injection. Our veterinary literature supports that this approach can be effective in dogs, cats, and horses; however, many animals don't like getting repeated injections and many owners don't enjoy giving them. In the early 2000's, clinical trials were developed to see if sublingual (under the tongue) allergy immunotherapy, using drops, could be effective. Happily, this approach has been successful, and sublingual drops or sprays have been available for some time.

In 2024, a group of European veterinary dermatologists published a paper on the epicutaneous (through the skin) administration of allergens as a new method for allergy immunotherapy in dogs. One in this study, the allergens were suspended in a glycerine and polyethylene glycol base and applied to the skin for 12 hours once weekly. There were 9 French bulldogs and 6 Labradors in this study, and they were examined over 6 months for their response. Itch was reduced in 73% of the dogs and skin lesions in 66% of dogs over this time period; early responses were seen within 3 months. The

most important assessment was how the owners of these dogs felt about the treatment; 94% of dog owners thought that the response in their dogs was good to excellent, and that the treatment was easy to administer.

Since that time, a company was developed to bring this approach to pets. Allibre Pet Allergy Care has developed a transdermal (through the skin) cream containing allergens based on testing and customized for each pet. This cream is applied to the inside flap of the ear once daily, alternating ears. A recent abstract presented at the North American Veterinary Dermatology Forum in April 2025 showed encouraging results. Levels of allergic antibody (IgE) to ragweed, timothy grass, and house dust mites were substantially reduced, and clinical lesions showed good improvement too. This study included only 6 dogs, so more work is needed to be sure that it meets its original promise. It does appear to be more expensive than injections or sublingual drops or sprays. For more information visit the Allibre website (<https://www.allibre.com/>) where you can download information and see some testimonials from veterinary dermatologists.

Reference:

1. das Neves Pinto et al. Challenging the norm: epicutaneous immunotherapy for canine atopic dermatitis. *Allergy* 2024; 79:255.