



THE HEALTHY  
PET CARE SERIES

# The Truth About Pet. Allergies

How Holistic Care, Mushrooms  
and CBD Can Help Your Pet

DOC ROB SILVER DVM, MS, FACVBM



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Published by Well-Pet Vet Advisors,  
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# DOC ROB SILVER

## DVM, MS, FACVBM



Dr. Robert Silver, a 1982 graduate of Colorado State University's College of Veterinary Medicine, embarked on his life's journey of helping animals, by founding one of the first holistic and integrative veterinary practices in the US, in Boulder, Colorado. He combined alternative healing methods, diet, and herbal therapies with good quality conventional medicine to effectively address complex chronic diseases.

Dr. Silver, as early as 2000, following Colorado legalizing medical cannabis, started to see patients who had been given cannabis by their "pet parents" for their problems. From his early work in veterinary cannabis, Doc Rob developed expertise with veterinary medical cannabis use in patients, and from that experience, he authored a book on its applications in pet treatment, emphasizing both its benefits and its risks.

Dr Silver has a second book, this one on mushrooms and cannabis currently inching its way to publication. He has also authored a number of very instructive eBooks, and is preparing to publish several more on other conditions that are well managed with cannabis and mushrooms and other appropriate therapeutics.

Furthermore, Dr Silver contributed significantly to the development of 40 unique and powerful veterinary nutraceutical formulations for RxVitamins for Pets. After retiring from clinical practice, he established the Well-Pet Dispensary website, a valuable resource for pet owners, offering high-potency pet supplements and reliable information.

Dr. Silver's commitment to enhancing pets' quality of life and strengthening their bond with their devoted owners remains unwavering. He continues to share his knowledge through extensive travels, educating fellow veterinarians on the advantages of an integrative approach to pet care, ensuring his lifelong mission of helping pets and their owners thrive together.

Recently, Dr. Silver was honored by being awarded the "Holistic Educator of the Year 2024" by the American Holistic Veterinary Medical Association, for his work educating veterinarians and pet parents on the science that underlies the supplements that manage their pet's chronic problems. Dr. Silver also was accepted as a Charter Fellow of the American College of Veterinary Botanical Medicine (FACVBM), as the result of his career blending herbal medicines, including the use of cannabis and functional mushrooms along with food therapy and conventional medicine to treat the untreatable conditions of pet diseases, which are too many to list here.

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# About This Healthy PetCare Series

*The common pet problems covered in this Healthy Petcare eBook Series are examples of the conditions most commonly responsive to the use of cannabis, CBD, medical mushrooms, supplements and diet. If your pet suffers from one of these problems, this book can help you understand your pet's problem(s), and offer a clear path for you to add holistic therapies to your pet's health program.*



# About This Book on Pet Allergies

*Pet allergies, including ear problems, are the most commonly searched pet problem on Google.com. That is why I am publishing this eBook on pet allergies first, to kick off this Healthy PetCare series with the most needed information for pet parents with allergic pets.*

Every dog or cat's problem, although similar to other pets with similar problems, is actually very special and very unique to that critter. I'm sure you feel that your pet is a very special and unique individual, I feel that way about my Lab, Ollie.

Each pet is unique due to its individualized DNA, which gives your pet its special "biochemical individuality". Every pet will respond best to an individualized program that takes its special and unique nature into account.

This integrative veterinary medical program for allergies has been developed over my 40 years of practice as a holistic veterinarian.

I use the story of Poochie's journey to find relief from her terrible allergies as an example of how you can help your own pet who may be suffering from allergies. I have used this integrative medical programs successfully in my veterinary practice in Boulder, Colorado for many years. In the past 8 years since cannabis has become legal, I've added the use of cannabis and medicinal mushrooms to my protocols for allergies.

The information in this book is based on the evidence found in the scientific literature, combined with my own 40 years of practical experience treating these allergic patients. I've included many references to these scientific

publications for you citizen scientists out there who want to know the details about things that affect their pets.

This integrative program I am recommending for your pet's allergies should help considerably, but I can't guarantee that it will eliminate the symptoms completely. As mentioned, each pet's problem is similar to other pets with similar problems, but also unique, based on its own "biochemical individuality".

*Please remember that this book cannot substitute for a thorough examination and advice by a licensed veterinarian. Your veterinarian will learn a lot during your pet's medical appointment by physically examining them in their office. They will be listening to their heart, taking their temperature, and physically examining them in person.*

*There is only so much a book can do, but in partnership with your veterinarian, this book can help guide you in the use of supplements supportive of the conventional treatments your vet has recommended. This is the definition of Integrative Medicine, blending the best of conventional medicine with complementary and alternative therapies.*



# Why I Wrote This Book

*In this self-help eBook I am sharing my 40+ years of experience as an integrative and holistic veterinarian with you.*

**T**his way, even though I've retired from day-to-day clinical practice, I can still help the critters, and leave this world a better place for our beloved pets.

Dogs with allergies are often miserable. Their allergies typically affect their skin, and when they have allergies, whether from foods or from environmental causes, they will scratch themselves a lot, often to the point of creating sores from their scratching. Allergies make dogs miserable, but they also make their pet parents miserable.

I'll often hear from pet parents about their allergic pet:

*"My dog is scratching herself so much she is keeping me awake at night, causing sores and bleeding on her skin. She is also making disgusting licking sounds when she isn't scratching herself!*

*She is also shaking her head a lot, and her ears have a weird smell to them, they look like they have pus in the canal. They really stink a lot. Also, her greasy skin and haircoat are so smelly, I can smell it the moment I open the front door!*

*Can you help me help my poor miserable pet without using the steroids which make her fat, aggressive and pee in the house?" That's all my vets have ever offered to treat her, and although they stop the scratching, the side-effects just get to be too much for me to handle"*

Although allergies are not life threatening, they can make life pretty difficult for all involved. Gaining control over these types of allergies is really challenging, and sometimes seems impossible without the use of strong drugs like steroids.



# Modern Medical Treatment for Allergies

Recently modern medicine has created some unique pharmaceuticals to address the symptoms of allergies that aren't as toxic as the steroids, prednisone, prednisolone, triamcinolone and dexamethasone.

These new medications, such as Apoquel™ and Cytopoint™ are not as problematic or dangerous to use as long term steroid use, but can have their own side-effects that may still be a problem. The feedback from a number of pet parents who have tried Apoquel™ and/or Cytopoint™ in their dogs is that it works well at first, but its effectiveness seems to taper off over time for some pets. (Again, that is the biochemical individuality that I have been mentioning)

The use of “allergy shots,” which now can also be given orally, are traditionally considered the best approach to allergies, but they take quite a bit of time to become effective. They don't always do a perfect job in terms of stopping that incessant scratching, licking and the trauma to their skin that comes from that scratching and licking, but they can help make life a little easier for you and your pet.



# POOCHIE'S STORY

*Here's an example of a dog I saw as a patient who had pretty bad allergies. I've changed the names and some of the details for the sake of their privacy.*

**W**hen "Poochie" walked into my exam room, she was wearing a t-shirt wrapped around her waist, with her front legs through the arm holes and her head through the neck hole. I could smell the foul odor of her skin when she walked into my veterinary hospital, it was so strong. In my exam room it was almost overwhelming. Vets learn to "mouth breathe", to be able to be close to that kind of a smell for long periods of time and not "die" from it. If the odor doesn't come up through the nose, the smell is much less bad!

Before I examined Poochie I spent a considerable amount of time learning the history and background of her problem. Poochie is a 6 year old spayed female black Standard

Poodle weighing 65 pounds. Carol, Poochie's mom, said that she started scratching herself at about 18 months of age, and it has only worsened over the years. She's been to see a dermatology specialist who suggested allergy testing and hyposensitization (allergy) shots. Carol tried the shots, but hadn't seen much in the way of results after a year. She tried the new allergy medication, Apoquel™ and that seemed to work for a while, but now, wasn't so effective. She had tried steroids and



antihistamines but the steroids made her too aggressive to other dogs, and she started peeing in the house. The antihistamines just made Poochie sleepy all the time. She tried supplements, [fish oil](#), homeopathy, even acupuncture, all to no avail.

I'm used to seeing the most difficult cases that aren't responding well to conventional meds. Many times my suggestions make a difference, and they improve. Sometimes I fail, too, and my suggestions don't make a difference. I prefer seeing these patients with difficult to treat conditions, when they are just starting with the early symptoms. If I can see them before they start use of medications, especially immune-suppressive medications such as: Cyclosporin, prednisolone, prednisone, triamcinolone, dexamethasone, Cytopoint™, or Apoquel™, I feel I can make more progress early in the case than if they have been on the drugs yet, or for very long.

I don't hesitate to use these strong medications if my patient is suffering. In the short term, these meds are manageable, but long term (months and years), their continued use makes it more difficult for the immune-supportive therapies I use to work as well as they can due to the pre-existing suppression of immune function from these medications.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.Nutriscan.org](http://www.Nutriscan.org)

For Poochie's care I wanted to run a food allergy/sensitivity saliva test that Carol could purchase herself and conduct in her own home. The testing company<sup>1</sup> would share the results with me and I would then advise her on which foods to avoid that might be complicating the allergy picture. The results would take a few weeks to arrive, so in the meantime I wanted to start Poochie on a few important supplements for her allergies and healthy skin that are discussed, in-depth in the following pages.

I had explained to Carol why I thought so many of these supplements together could benefit Poochie, and she agreed that it was worth a try. I advised her to take it slowly and to introduce one new thing at a time to be sure it wasn't causing trouble for Poochie. I suggested a gradual introduction over 6 weeks. I knew that if Poochie had an unexpectedly bad reaction to a supplement or two, that it would be difficult to convince her that we needed to keep at it for success.

Carol gradually introduced all of these supplements to Poochie's daily regimen, who accepted them in her food or with a little bit of "bribe food" with no problems or side-effects. It's always good to introduce new things to your pet gradually to avoid adverse reactions like diarrhea or vomiting or hives. I suggest starting with 25% of the

final dosage and gradually increasing that over a period of two - three weeks to be safe.

Once we got back the results of the food allergy/sensitivity saliva test from Nutriscan, Carol and I discussed the results, and looked at foods she could feed that were not on the reactive food list.

Eating foods that the immune system is reactive to can create “whole body” inflammation. You can draw a direct line from excessive inflammation in the body and the itching symptoms of the skin. If an ingredient is not defined as having a food allergy positive reaction, it can still contribute to increasing or decreasing inflammation.

This is why it is important to find a diet that is non-inflammatory. Better yet would be an anti-inflammatory diet. These kinds of diets are always a good idea for pets with allergic dermatitis like Poochie. Using a very detailed and unique test such as with Nutriscan.org increases your ability to create a true anti-inflammatory diet individualized for your pet. Individualization means it is targeted to your pet and will work better in reducing inflammation.

## **POOCHIE'S PROGRAM OUTCOME**

Once Carol had gotten the test results back from Poochie's Nutriscan test, ordered the supplements I had suggested, and made all the changes in Poochie's diet, it took another 3 months for things to start looking better for her. The PEA combined with the Silver Bullet™ really did help to slow down her incessant scratching. She was scratching less and at the same time her skin began to look healthier.

Over the next 6 months, Poochie nearly returned to normal. Every once in a while she would have a flare up, and Carol would increase the amount of the Silver Bullet she was giving, so that after a week or so, things would start to look better. Once Carol called and asked about using an antihistamine when the scratching got pretty intense, so I suggested she try Zyrtec™, which wouldn't make her too sleepy.

It's important to note that each dog has its own response to these supplements and diet, just as they have individual responses to drugs like Apoquel™. Your dog may not respond like Poochie did, or as much as you may hope it will. If that is the case, you may want to seek out a holistic veterinarian who practices acupuncture and can provide special Chinese herbs for allergies, which may add an extra increment of value to your treatments.

## POOCHIE'S PROGRAM SUMMARY

1. Nutriscan.org saliva test for food sensitivities and intolerances
2. Adjust ingredients in food to account for reactive ingredients found on the Nutriscan test
3. Add anti-inflammatory supplements to her program
  - a. [Fish oil](#) (EPA+DHA = @50 mg of the sum per pound of body weight daily)
  - b. [Quercetin](#) @2.5 mg/pound twice daily
    - i. 65 pound Poochie would get 150 mg twice daily of quercetin



- c. [5 Defenders™](#) mushroom blend with Reishi and Chaga for their antihistamine value
- d. [Tremella fuciformis](#) (Snow fungus) extract powder
  - i. 1 mg/pound of body weight of Tremella beta glucans
  - ii. ½ teaspoon of Tremella contains 100 mg of beta glucans
  - iii. 65 pound Poochie would take 75-100 mg of Tremella beta glucans which would be the same as ½ teaspoon of the powder
- e. [PEA](#) to be given at 5 mg/pound daily
  - iv. 65 pound Poochie would take 325 mg of PEA daily, which is equal to 1 400 mg capsule.
- f. [CBD](#) @ 0.25 mg/pound twice daily with food
  - i. 65 pound Poochie would take 15 – 30 mg of CBD with food twice daily before each meal. Start with the 15 mg lower dose and if it isn't helping enough with the itching, double that dose, and see if the next 2 weeks will bring relief. If not, then double again
- g. [CBG](#) @ 0.13 mg/pound twice daily with food.
  - i. CBG has been found to be helpful with other skin problems such as psoriasis,

so in combination with CBD it will work even better for itching from allergies

- ii. 65 pound Poochie would take 7.5-15 mg of CBG twice daily with food, with the CBD. The Silver Bullet™ will provide 60 mg of CBD and 30 mg of CBG in each mL. [hyperlink to The Silver Bullet product page]

h. Flax seed meal; 1 tsp per each 15 pounds of body weight

- i. 65 pound Poochie would get 1-2 Tablespoons of flax seed meal daily, divided into two meals.
- i. [Borage seed oil](#)
  - i. 65 pound Poochie would get 1 capsule containing about 240 mg of gamma linolenic acid (GLA) twice daily

# THE TRUTH ABOUT SKIN ALLERGIES IN PETS

*Allergies occur when the immune system reacts to something that is not a threat to the health of the animal, but which, due to the reactivity and hypersensitivity of the immune system, causes symptoms of itching and redness and inflammation of the skin or the digestive system or respiratory system.*



*Often allergies will progress to become ulcerated sores that are worsened by the scratching, biting and chewing that dogs and cats often do when their skin is irritated and inflamed.*

Most often, dogs and cats are sensitive to pollen, dust and mold they inhale, but they can also be sensitive to food ingredients and to things they come into contact with, such as insect bites, plants and chemicals in the environment.

The most common symptom of an allergy is the incessant scratching or licking of the skin due to an itching sensation, also called, “pruritis”, which is secondary to the inflammation and histamine release from specialized immune cells called “Mast cells”.

Excessive scratching and licking can be damaging to the skin, and can easily turn an area of inflammation into an ulceration of the skin, creating what is commonly called a “**hot spot**”. Another term for hot spot is “acute moist dermatitis.” This is an area of the skin that your dog has been licking and/or scratching so much that the hair has come off, and the naked skin is red, thickened and inflamed.

The topical use of CBD or CBG is a good topical treatment for a hotspot, after cleaning it off with warm soapy water. The traditional treatment for hot spots is to wash it first, and then apply a topical steroid and antibiotic, which also work pretty well. It is important to keep your pet from scratching and licking the hot spot, which just makes it worse.



# Ears/Anal Glands/ Paw Problems

*Most of the time, dogs with allergies to foods, will also have problems with their ears getting “goopy” and infected.*

**E**ar problems are most commonly due to food allergies, and once a diet that is not allergenic is found, the ear problems will commonly resolve on their own. Ear problems are often coupled with anal gland problems and a lot of paw licking, so much so that they develop a dermatitis (skin infection and inflammation) in the webbing between their toes.

The use of topical medication in the ears, and on the feet can help to keep the symptoms under control. Having your dog’s anal glands expressed regularly, and instilled with an antiseptic, anti-inflammatory ointment can also help.

But ultimately, until you get their food allergies under control, you will always be applying

these topicals to control the symptoms so your dog will be more comfortable.

Often an “Elizabethan collar” is used to prevent the dog from its destructive behavior. With the application of a CBD salve or salve made from other cannabinoids such as CBG the inflammation will be reduced. It is also important to keep your pet from licking and scratching.

The use of a collar could be helpful, or using a T-shirt or some other means to cover the area so they can’t get to it will also help. You can also use an old sock to cover their paw(s) to prevent their licking. Be careful not to wrap the tape or rubber band too tightly around their lower leg so as to not cut off the circulation.

# INTEGRATIVE/ HOLISTIC TREATMENTS for ALLERGIES EXPLAINED





# MEDICINAL MUSHROOMS

## REISHI/CHAGA/ TREMELLA

*Mushrooms and the many beneficial bioactive compounds they contain can benefit the health of the skin and haircoat in a number of ways:*

### MICROBIOME SUPPORT

The fiber in mushrooms that consists of beta glucans and chitin, provides food to the many beneficial microorganisms that make up the population of the microbiome. We are learning that a healthy microbiome will improve the health of the skin, and support a more balanced immune response to potential allergens.

### IMMUNO-MODULATION

The beta glucans, and other immuno-active molecules found in mushrooms, such as the triterpenes, nucleosides, flavonoids and phenols, all contribute to a better balanced immune system in those who take mushrooms regularly for extended periods of time. With allergies, it is the immune system that “goes out of whack”, and responds to harmless substances, like pollen or dust with an exaggerated reaction. Supporting the immune system can help to reduce its reactivity to allergens.

## ANTI-HISTAMINE ACTION

Mast cells of the immune system are the allergy cells that cause many symptoms of allergies by releasing the chemical histamine that it stores in little intracellular “vacuoles”. An allergic reaction triggers these cells to release their histamine, which causes the symptoms of an allergic reaction, which includes itching, local swelling and redness.

Two mushrooms, Reishi and Chaga both contain special molecules, called triterpenes that counter the effect of the histamine release. I recommend that either or both be given. You might find that one works better than the other for the anti-histamine reaction, or that both together work better than any one of them alone.

## MOISTENING AND HYDRATING EFFECT ON THE SKIN

The Snow Fungus, *Tremella fuciformis* is used in cosmetics due to its hydrating and moistening effect on skin. When ingested, tremella will also hydrate. Benefits to the skin often are seen in 2-3 weeks, but some pets can benefit sooner.





# Cannabis

*Cannabis contains CBD and other compounds that are potent anti-inflammatories.*

Recently two studies in dogs have been published that show that CBD at moderate to high dosages can help reduce itching when dogs have allergies. Both studies found that to be true, but they also both found that the CBD didn't have much impact on improving the condition of the skin's dermatitis, in terms of reducing the redness and sores.

The first study was conducted in Japan, and used broad-spectrum CBD, in 8 client-owned dogs, without any placebo controls.<sup>2</sup> The second study recruited 32 client-owned dogs that used a product with a 1:1 ratio of CBD:CBDA, and also used a placebo-control group.<sup>3</sup>

Both of these studies found, with the use of these cannabinoid formulations, that the dog's itching, called "pruritis" in medical terminology, was significantly less with the use of the cannabinoid products. The other symptoms of skin allergies in dogs such as redness of the skin, and skin sores, were observed to be slightly less in the a few dogs in the group of 8 allergic dogs in the Japanese study. In the second study of 32 dogs, none were observed to receive any improvement of the dermatitis-caused redness and sores.

The doses used in both studies were within the same range of dosing that I recommend in this book. They used the same process to establish a dosage, by starting with a

2 Mori, C., Yoshida, M., Kawano, K., Fukuyama, T., Arai, T. Effects of cannabidiol without delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol on canine atopic dermatitis: A retrospective assessment of 8 cases. *Canadian Veterinary Journal* (April 2022); Vol 63:423-426.

3 Lowinger, M., Wakslag, JJ, Bowden, D., Peters-Kennedy, J., Rosenberg, A. The effect of a mixed cannabidiol and cannabidiolic acid. *Veterinary Dermatology*, 2022;33:329-e77.

lower dose of 0.25 mg of CBD per pound of body weight twice daily, taken with a small amount of fatty food before each meal. This dosage was increased, if, after 2 weeks no improvement was observed. Some dogs found relief with this lower starting dosage, but others needed a higher dosage, which in some cases was as high as 1 mg/pound twice daily with food.

In the Japanese study, which used Broad Spectrum CBD, some of the dogs improved enough on the CBD to be able to reduce their steroid medication. Itching was less in this study, as were the skin lesions which improved slightly in a few dogs.

The second study used a dosage of 0.5 mg/pound twice daily of each of its two cannabinoids, CBD and CBDA. This study used the fixed dosage of 0.5 mg/pound of each of CBD and CBDA, but only found a reduction in itching, with no observed benefit to the skin with this higher dose.

Both of these studies support the use of cannabinoids in the treatment of allergies in the dog. Using a gradual dosing approach: start with a low dose of 0.25 mg/pound twice daily with food, and increase it as needed until you get an improved response. This empirical approach will help you determine the most effective dosing for your dog.

## **CBD**

CBD is the non-intoxicating resin derived from the hemp plant, *Cannabis sativa*, L. It has potent anti-inflammatory effects on the body and the skin, when taken twice daily with food.

## **CBDA**

CBDA is the raw, unheated CBD, that is acidic. It has been found to be much more anti-inflammatory than CBD, and is better absorbed.

## **CBG**

CBG is a minor cannabinoid found in the hemp plant, that has potent anti-inflammatory activity, and has been found to be helpful with immune mediated skin diseases such as psoriasis, and eczema in humans.

This novel and emerging cannabinoid has good evidence that it can reduce inflammation in the skin, and has been measured to have increased anti-inflammatory effects over CBD. CBG also inhibits an enzyme that breaks down PEA, thus contributing to higher blood levels of this important cannabinoid-like molecule for a longer period of time. No study has been published yet about the value of CBG for allergic skin disease in dogs or cats. The evidence does support that it plays a positive role in managing allergic skin disease according to reports for pet owners and a few veterinarians.



# PEA

## (PALMITOYLETHANOLAMIDE)

A number of well-conducted, placebo-controlled, clinical trials in allergic dogs and cats found that PEA ([palmitoylethanolamide](#)), a tasteless fatty molecule found in all animals, can help to reduce the symptoms of allergies – the itching, and red skin, especially. It needed to be given for a month before results were seen, but overall, many animals in the studies received comfort from their incessant scratching.

PEA was discovered in the 1950's during a Rheumatic Fever outbreak. It was found that populations of children for whom eggs were a major part of their daily food intake were more resistant to this infection than children who did not eat eggs much.

Detailed laboratory analysis of eggs found this mouthful of a molecule that we simplify the polysyllabic name down to three letters: PEA. This material is found in all mammals,

and is part of the molecules in the body that are involved in the Entourage Effect for cannabis. In fact, when we take in some CBD, or your pet does, it causes this molecule, PEA to stimulate cell membrane receptors that are involved in the immune system to have this anti-infective and anti-inflammatory activity.

Further study into PEA found that it also had a good influence on relieving pain. It was found to be an anti-allergic and neuroprotective molecule. When it was given to dogs with allergic dermatitis, or "atopy", it was able to significantly reduce itching and redness of the skin. In cats who have a type of severe dermatitis called an "eosinophilic granuloma complex," commonly called "Rodent Ulcer" would go into remission when fed relatively small amounts of this tasteless and odorless fatty molecule.

PEA is a type of fat molecule naturally occurring in humans and all animals, as well as in common foods.

When the body experiences the immune dysfunction of an allergic response, it begins to produce more PEA. But when PEA is added orally in addition to what the body produces, it has a much more substantial effect. This beneficial effect may take as long as a month (or longer for more severe cases) to develop, so be patient and continue to give this supplement regularly.

- **Dog Dose:** 10 mg/kg/d = 4.5 mg/pound/day for dogs; Bioclinic™ PEA 400 mg capsules (hyperlink to product on website)
  - 10 pounds – 45 mg/d  
¼ capsule daily
  - 25 pounds – 112 mg/d  
½ capsule daily
  - 50 pounds – 225 mg/d  
¾ capsule daily
  - 75 pounds – 336 mg/d  
1 capsule daily
  - 100 pounds – 450 mg/d  
1.5 capsules daily
  - >100 pounds up to 800 mg daily  
2 capsules daily

- **Cat Dose:** 15 mg/kg/d = 7 mg/pound per day for cats; Bioclinic™ PEA 400 mg/capsule
  - 5 pounds – 35 mg/d  
¼ capsule daily
  - 10 pounds – 70 mg/d  
¼ capsule daily
  - 15 pounds – 105 mg/d  
¼ capsule daily
  - 20 pounds – 140 mg/d  
½ capsule daily
  - 25 pounds – 175 mg/d  
½ capsule daily

There are a number of studies in dogs and cats that show PEA to be able to improve skin allergies in both dogs and cats with twice daily oral doses. It may take 4-8 weeks for the PEA to have its maximal effect. PEA is considered to be GRAS by the US FDA, which means it is “Generally Recognized as Safe”, and means just what it says: PEA is as safe as food.

PEA is what we call an “**Entourage Compound**”, which means it is part of the body’s **endocannabinoid system**, and that it works together with a number of other naturally occurring molecules in our cells to reduce the allergic immune response. <sup>4</sup>

There have been studies in cats and dogs that showed that PEA is safe and effective

4 Clayton P, Hill M., Bogoda N, et al. Palmitoylethanolamide: A Natural Compound for Health Management. International Journal of Molecular Sciences; 2021:22,5305. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijms22105305> .

to use for canine and feline atopic dermatitis (skin allergies usually from allergens that are inhaled). PEA was also found to be helpful for cats who have a chronic inflammatory granulomatous condition commonly called “Rodent Ulcer”, but which has the medical name: “Feline Eosinophilic Granuloma complex.”

In the study of 160 dogs with atopic dermatitis otherwise known as inhalant allergic dermatitis, PEA was given at 10 mg/kg of body weight (~5 mg/pound) once daily for 8 weeks. The amount of itching (pruritis) and the types of sores that resulted from the atopic dermatitis, and the overall Quality of Life of the canine participants were measured. 146 dogs completed the 8 week study. It was determined that at the conclusion of this study that the PEA significantly improved the pruritis and the sores, and overall Quality of Life was improved as well in these dogs. After the first month, 80% of the dogs had improved on the daily PEA dosage.<sup>5</sup>

There is a similar study in cats diagnosed with “non-flea hypersensitivity dermatitis”, which is how feline atopic/allergic dermatitis is described by veterinary dermatologists. Our understanding of feline allergic/atopic dermatitis lags behind that of canine allergic/

atopic dermatitis, hence the differing terminology describing very similar problems in these two species.

25 cats completed this study. They were given 15 mg/kg or 6.8 mg per pound of PEA daily. It was determined that, compared to the group of cats that received a placebo treatment, the cats that received the PEA remained symptom free for a significantly longer period of time.

Some of the cats in this study also were dosed with a corticosteroid for a short period of time, and these cats that also received the PEA had significantly less pruritis than the control group. This means, if your cat cannot be taken off of a steroid without disturbing its quality of life, that the concurrent use of PEA with that steroid, might allow you to use a lower dose of steroid and still get the same benefits without the potential toxicity that steroids can have on the liver.<sup>6</sup> This is the same benefit found in the Japanese skin allergy study using CBD, it also found a “steroid-sparing” effect. The use of both of these will work better than either of them alone.

5 Noli, C., et al. Efficacy of ultra-micronized palmitoylethanolamide in canine atopic dermatitis: an open-label multi-centre study. *Vet Dermatology* 2015;26:432-e101.

6 Noli, C., et al. Effect of dietary supplementation with ultramicrosized palmitoylethanolamide in maintaining remission in cats with non-flea hypersensitivity dermatitis: a double-blind, multicenter, randomized, placebo-controlled study. *Vet Dermatology* 2019;30:387-e117.

# SUPPLEMENTS for ALLERGIES

*There are many supplements recommended for allergies, but their effectiveness varies with each pet's biochemical individuality and the nature of their allergy problem.*



Some pets will respond very well to these herbs and nutraceuticals, other pets, not so well. Dosage is important, as well as the duration of therapy. It can take 2-4 months of therapy for diet and supplements to make a significant difference in your dog's response to allergies.

Listed below are the supplements for which there is the best evidence in the literature for them to work for allergies.

## FISH OIL (EPA+DHA)

Of all the supplements available, fish oil is the most versatile, affecting nearly every system in the body, including the skin. Its value is not so much for the condition of the skin's moisture. Linoleic acid (LA) helps with that. We find LA in flax seed meal. EPA and DHA are potent anti-inflammatory agents, although they take consistent daily use for 2-3 months before their full effect to be felt or observed.

[EPA/DHA fatty acids](#) are most commonly found in fish oil, but may also be found in other marine lipid sources such as green lipped mussel oil or Hoka fish roe oil, or high DHA oil from algal sources.

When used at sufficiently high doses for at least 3 months, EPA and DHA can reduce inflammation in the body as a whole. Inflammation drives the pathology we see with skin allergies: The itching, redness, and the skin sores.

We give a therapeutic amount of EPA/DHA by using the sum of the amount of each fatty acid (EPA+DHA) in each milliliter (mL) of oil and dose it at 50 mg/pound of body weight daily of EPA+DHA. It can take 90-120 days for fish oil to have full effect in your pet. For instance, if a fish oil has 180 mg/mL of EPA and 120 mg/mL of DHA, their sum is 300 mg/mL. 1 mL of this 300 mgs of EPA+DHA is for a 300 mg/50 mg/pound = 6 pounds of body weight, given daily. You can divide this dose into two administrations if it is easier to give that way.

**Flax seed meal** (1- 3 Tablespoons per meal) Its best to keep this in the refrigerator. Flax seed, once it's been milled, only has a 3 month shelf life. Flax seed is a rich "super-food", containing both omega 6 and omega 3 fatty acid oils, soluble and insoluble fiber, and something called "lignans" which have been found to help balance the body's hormones, provide antioxidant benefits and can help with certain conditions such as Cushing's Disease when combined with melatonin.

[Borage seed oil](#) (24% gamma linolenic acid (GLA): 240 mg twice daily) is another seed oil that contains a different fatty acid than fish oil and flax seed meal. This fatty acid is technically an omega 6 fatty acid oil, but acts as an anti-inflammatory fatty acid like fish oil and flax seed oil. When all of these oils are given together they have an additive effect in reducing inflammation of the skin,

and improving the allergy symptoms of scratching, licking and chewing the skin.

**GLA (*gamma linoleic acid*)** is found in borage oil, black current seed oil, and evening primrose oils. It works together with EPA and DHA to help reduce the inflammation associated with skin allergies. The dosage for GLA hasn't been worked out as well as for EPA and DHA, but one paper used 12.5 mg of GLA for each pound of body weight daily successfully. Using these three fatty acids (EPA+DHA+GLA) together is the best based upon published studies.<sup>7</sup>

**Quercetin** is a flavonoid, derived from fruits and vegetables. It is a powerful antioxidant that also has the ability to inhibit the release of histamine from mast cells. Histamine is a chemical produced by the mast cells, which are immune cells involved in the allergic process. It is one of the main driving forces that create allergy symptoms.

There are different forms of quercetin, with differing amounts of bioavailability. Quercetin is not well absorbed, except when found in foods. The phosphatidylcholine-bound quercetin (quercetin phytosome) is the best-absorbed form of quercetin. Generally, we give our cats and dogs 50-250 mg of quercetin twice daily with food, but the dosage is about 3 mg/pound twice daily.

This flavonoid has been found to reduce the release of histamine by mast cells, which is one of the most important mechanisms that create the symptoms of itching also known as pruritis. When combined with the PEA its effects are amplified by their synergistic relationship.

## **PROBIOTICS – MICROBIOME SUPPORT.**

Beneficial bowel bacteria help to improve immune system function by providing the bowel with the appropriate strains of healthy bacteria and microorganisms. There are a number of available probiotic products available. I suggest finding a product with multiple strains and a very high bacterial count in the billions for each dose. There is no single “best” probiotic in the marketplace. Each pet defines for itself which probiotic formula works the best for them.

Spore-forming probiotics and fungal-based probiotics are more heat stable than the lactic acid bacteria probiotics. They do not need refrigeration, and have copious research supporting their value for digestive health. The microbiome of the gut plays an important role in all of the functions of the body, including the

<sup>7</sup> Taugbol BB, Vroom, MW, et al. A randomized, double-blinded, placebo-controlled, multicenter study on the efficacy of a diet with high levels of eicosapentaenoic acid and gamma linolenic acid in the control of canine atopic dermatitis. *Veterinary Dermatology*; 2004: 15(Suppl. 1), 1-19.

immune system's response to allergens. The skin has its own local microbiome, and its health is directly related to the health of the microbiome of the bowel. Keeping the microbiome "happy" by inoculating your pet daily with probiotic cultures is essential for a healthy skin and healthy response to allergens.

**Prebiotics** are food for the microbiome. Healthy fiber supplies this nourishment. This is another good reason to be sure there is adequate fiber in your pet's diet. Not only is fiber good for healthy stool formation, but also to feed the microbiome. Mushrooms have some of the best insoluble fiber of all foods. Not only does mushroom fiber feed the microbiome, but the mushroom fiber that contains chitin, will help to moisturize and reduce the inflammation of the lining of the bowel, which can help with bowel problems like colitis, inflammatory bowel disease, and Leaky Gut.

**Postbiotics** are fermentation by-products of bacteria, yeast and fungi that contain constituents that support a healthy microbiome and immune system. Foods like fermented vegetables (think sauerkraut), yogurt, tempeh, soy sauce and miso contain these valuable nutrients, which are good additions to your pets diet, whether you are making a home-prepared meal, or just feeding that dry food.

## HERBS FOR ALLERGIES.

Traditionally over the years, herbs have been used to address the symptoms of allergies in humans. We can use the same herbs for our pets with allergies. It is best if you consult with a veterinarian who is skilled in the art and science of veterinary herbal medicine. [The Veterinary Botanical Medical Association](#), of which I was president a number of years ago, has a directory on their website that can help you find a holistic veterinary herbalist for your pet's allergies.

- Nettle leaf
- Dandelion
- Red Clover
- Yellow Dock
- Licorice Root
- Detoxifying herbs
  - Burdock root
  - Milk thistle seed
  - Turmeric

# THE CONVENTIONAL MEDICINE APPROACH to ALLERGIES

*Allergies are complicated diseases with a potential number of causes that are not the same from one allergic pet to another.*

**S**ince allergies can be very severe and debilitating, and may not respond to alternative therapies alone, I suggest blending both conventional allergy medicine approaches with my integrative and holistic approaches for the best results.

No one likes to use drugs in their pets, but sometimes their suffering is so huge that you have just bite the bullet and give them these drugs. It's important to know that not all allergies are treated the same, as they can manifest differently in different pets due to biochemical individuality.

There are 3 types of conventional therapeutics currently being used to treat allergies in pets:

## IMMUNE SUPPRESSIVE REMEDIES

Immune Suppressive remedies give the quickest and strongest response over time, but are associated with adverse side-effects when used for long periods of time at the high doses needed to control the symptoms of allergies.

Examples of Immune Suppressive therapies include:

- Corticosteroids like prednisone
- Transplant rejection drugs like Atopica™ (cyclosporin)

## SYMPTOM-MODIFYING TREATMENTS

Symptom-Modifying treatments interfere with the chemicals our immune system creates that are the cause of the symptoms of allergies

**Examples** of Symptom-modifying therapies include:

1. **Antihistamines** counter the effects of the histamine released from mast cells of the immune system when an allergic response is activated

**Dosages** of common OTC **Antihistamines** for dogs and cats:

- Benadryl™ (diphenhydramine)
  - D: 1 mg/pound 2-3 times daily or as needed in a single dose
  - C: not used in cats
- Claritin™
  - D: 0.5 mg/pound 1-2 times daily
  - C: 5 mg 1-2 times daily
- Zyrtec™
  - D: 0.5 mg/pound 1-2 times daily
  - C: 5 mg 1-2 times daily
- Chlorpheniramine
  - D: 0.2 mg/pound 2-3 times daily or as needed in a single dose
  - C: 2 mg 1-2 times daily

2. **Monoclonal Antibodies** use genetically-engineered antibodies that are specific to the pro-inflammatory compounds produced during allergies. These compounds are produced by the allergy-activated immune cells and are responsible for creating the annoying symptoms of allergies. These monoclonal antibodies (MAB) are very specific to bind a specific cytokine. Cytokines are molecules produced by immune cells that are responsible for increasing or decreasing inflammation. These immune-based therapies do not cure the allergies, but can provide better quality of life than long-term steroid use by reducing or eliminating the symptoms without the steroid side-effects.

For many dogs these monoclonal antibody treatments are a god-send.

Severe allergies can be very difficult to treat or manage. They can be costly without any successful outcome. Some pet parents get so frustrated with their inability to help their beloved dogs who are suffering in their own skin that they consider euthanasia.

Monoclonal antibody treatments can really help, especially those patients with severe disease, where nothing else but high, toxic levels of steroids are needed to control their run-away symptoms. I've heard of some adverse reactions, some that were actually allergic reactions to the anti-allergy drug! (Go figure) These are a new type of therapy and non-toxic in comparison to corticosteroids.

Monoclonal antibody treatments are administered by injection and will last 2-4 weeks before another injection is needed. They are effective for atopic dermatitis in dogs.

Currently the only MAB available for atopic dermatitis in the dog is Cytopoint™ (Lokivetmab) injection, manufactured by Zoetis Animal Health. A single injection can reduce itching within 24 hours and can be effective for up to a full month. It is an monoclonal antibody treatment that binds the IL-31 cytokine which is a major chemical mediator of itching in allergic dogs.

**3. Immuno-Modulatory Therapies** are similar to monoclonal antibody therapies in that they interfere with the cascade of chemical signals in atopic dermatitis that cause itching. Apoquel™ (Oclacitinib maleate), manufactured by Zoetis Animal Health, inhibits the chemical mediators that are “up-stream” from the pro-inflammatory, pro-itch cytokines. These chemical messengers, when activated, will stimulate the production of IL-31 and other similarly-acting cytokines from immune cells. These cytokines create the itching and other symptoms commonly seen with allergies. Apoquel™ is a tablet that needs to be taken daily. It has been found to be effective for atopic dermatitis, food allergy dermatitis, flea allergy dermatitis, contact dermatitis, sarcoptic mange, or unspecified allergic dermatitis. It can be effective for a number of allergic type conditions that affect cats as well.

Contact and Food allergies are best treated by avoidance of the offending foods and environmental causes, but the use of this immunomodulatory drug will address those allergic symptoms from foods and contact with environmental materials.

It is important to note that if you are thinking about performing the Nutriscan.org saliva test to find out which food ingredients are allergenic to your dog,

you will have to stop the Apoquel™ for a while in order for the tests results to be valid.

**4. Disease-Modifying** Treatments will actually treat the disease through hypo-sensitization treatments. Examples of disease-modifying therapies include:

**5. Hyposensitization therapy.** These are traditionally what has been called: “Allergy Shots”. These injections consist of the specific antigens that your pet is allergic to, determined through intra-dermal skin testing (most accurate) or blood tests.

- The injections are given on a regular basis, daily, weekly, monthly, depending on the specific needs of your pet. The injections start with an extremely diluted solution of the antigens and, over time the concentration of the antigens gradually increases, which allows your pet’s immune system to stop being so reactive to these antigens, and as a result, your pet will have fewer symptoms.
- These shots will need to be given regularly by you to your pet over a period of months and probably years, with gradually increasing concentrations of antigens, and longer intervals between shots, until they are 1 month apart.
- They now have oral hypo-sensitization treatments available as well. These

oral treatments need to be given more frequently than the injection therapy.

- Hyposensitization has been considered the “Gold Standard” in allergy treatments, and still is the best and least toxic way to treat allergies in pets and in people.

**6. Elimination Diets.** Allergies can be caused not just by environmental antigens that are inhaled, but can also be caused by contact with allergens, and from food ingredients or food chemicals such as preservatives, additives, etc. Hyposensitization is specifically for inhalant allergies.

With **contact allergies**, we try to identify the cause of the allergy and avoid contact with it, which is a logical approach.

But with **food allergies** we need to identify the allergenic ingredients and materials in the foods we are feeding, and then feed a diet that does not contain these allergens.

Identifying the allergenic ingredients in your pet’s diet is not that easy a problem to solve. Often pets are fed a variety of different pet foods, may also be given treats and not uncommonly are fed table scraps and people food at random.

There are **two types of tests** that can help to identify these allergies:

- A **Blood test** for food allergies can identify one type of allergic reaction to food materials, but the experts tell us these blood tests are not very accurate over time. The blood test measures the IgE antibody which traditionally has been the antibodies involved with allergies.
- A **Saliva test** is now available that tests for several other categories of immune reactions to food ingredients. The saliva test determines if there are food intolerances or food sensitivities which are also immune mediated.
  - The antibodies tested with the saliva test are the IgG and IgM antibodies, which are more involved with immune reactions to food ingredients that classically have not been defined as “allergies” since IgE is not involved. Nonetheless, the reactions we see in pets to food ingredients are very commonly orchestrated through the IgG and IgM antibodies more than the IgE antibodies.
  - I’ve used this test many times and have found it more useful than the IgE blood tests that are the standard testing for food allergies.

**You can administer the saliva test yourself at home,** but the blood test will have to be performed at your vet’s where they can draw the blood and submit it for testing.

The site where you can order this test is: <http://www.nutriscan.org/>. You can add the name of your veterinarian on the test request form so they will also receive the test results.

**The Elimination Diet** is the most accurate means of determining to which food ingredients your pet is allergic, sensitive, or intolerant. This is a hand’s-on, empirical approach, to directly testing your pet with individual foods to observe a reaction or no reaction.

You have to start with a very bland diet that has limited ingredients that you have observed have not been reactive to your pet. Some people advocate for a pure diet of just tofu or potatoes and nothing else. I like to start with a saliva test and use that to guide my creation of the very bland hypoallergenic diet. This is best done in partnership with your veterinarian or with a veterinary dermatologist.

You feed this bland diet for 4 weeks, and you should see the symptoms that are characteristic of food allergies get less or go away. Often these symptoms are: smelly goopy ears, licking between their toes, licking their anus, anal gland problems.

Then you introduce one food ingredient, say chicken or beef, and observe your pet for developing food allergy symptoms again in 2 weeks. If they do not develop symptoms,

then that ingredient is probably ok to feed. Put that ingredient on your “good” list, and try the next ingredient. This is the most accurate means of food allergy testing, but extremely time-consuming and tedious.

Pets who have allergies to food ingredients, when fed a food ingredient they are not allergic to, will, over time, develop allergies to that previously non-reactive ingredient. The amount of time it takes for a pet to become allergic to a food ingredient to which it was not previously allergic is different for each pet, and it is impossible to predict.

My recommendation is to “sacrifice” one set of hypoallergenic ingredients in order to determine how long it takes to develop allergies to an originally non-allergenic food material. Once you determine how long it takes, you then change the one hypoallergenic diet for another hypoallergenic diet, so it doesn’t become allergenic. That way you can rotate back and forth between the hypoallergenic diets and not worry about them become allergenic.

## *Whew! It’s a lot of work to have an allergic pet!*

Dear Reader: Hopefully this book has been a helpful guide so you can better understand your pet’s allergies, and make the right decisions in terms of what to do. Hopefully you are seeing a conventional veterinarian or dermatologist who is helping you with the conventional therapeutics for pet allergies, and they are open to your use of these complementary and alternative therapies at the same time. Using them together will result in better success for your pet.

I highly recommend you find a holistic veterinarian who is close to you that you can visit, or who does telemedicine, and they can help you with these alternative approaches to get your pet healthy and happy and symptom-free.

With Gratitude  
Doc Rob Silver



# Resources

## SOURCES FOR RECOMMENDED PRODUCTS

- Organic Mushroom Extracts from Real Mushrooms™
  - [5 Defenders™ Capsules](#)
  - [5 Defenders™ bulk powder](#)
  - [Chaga capsules](#)
  - [Chaga powder](#)
  - [Reishi capsules](#)
  - [Tremella fuciformis bulk powder](#)
- Fish oil: [UltraEFA™](#)
- [Quercetin Phytosome™](#)
- [PEA](#)
- Doc Silver Naturals™ CBD:CBG Tinctures: [The Silver Bullet™](#) & [Sterling Silver™](#)
- [Borage oil \(GLA\)](#)
- [Doc Silver Naturals™ CBD:CBG Soft chews and tinctures](#)
- Probiotic: [RxBiotic™](#)
- [In-Home Saliva Allergy test](#)

## RESOURCE LIST: WEBSITES

- [Find a Holistic Vet Near You](#)
- [Find a Veterinary Herbalist Near You](#)
- [Doc Silver's Blog Site](#)
- [Doc Silver's eCommerce site where you can find these products and much more](#)

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