

## So You Have an Itchy Scratchy Dog...



Mulberry (The Good Life Bulldog Rescue)

Dogs with allergies are becoming increasingly more common—take a peek at the info below for ideas on how to make your fur friend a bit more comfortable!

Nebraska is home to lots of great allergens—from grass, to trees to native flowers, it seems like there is an allergen everywhere! Below, we're provided some ideas on how to help your pup cope. Please note: if you're adding medications or doing diet changes, it's imperative to implement just one at a time to evaluate impact and keep in touch with your vet!

- 1) **Diet:** Chicken/chicken by-product/chicken meal are some of the most common food allergens. Take a peek at your food, treats, vitamins, supplements and preventatives to evaluate the ingredients. Consider switching to a less common protein like duck, turkey, pork, or fish.
- 2) **Outside itchies:** We know you can't always control what your pup is doing while outside—ie taking a good roll in the leaves! We're not suggesting taking away all of the fun but consider doing a quick wipedown of your pup before coming inside. Get that belly, neck, chin, and paws with an unscented/fragrance-free diaper wipe or wet paper towel and wipe off a lot of those allergens!
- 3) **Talk with your vet about medications and medicated shampoo:** There are many items to help with basic and more complex allergies. For a one-off or infrequent allergy, consider benadryl (diphenhydramine) and/or zyrtec (cetirizine). The Merck Veterinary Manual <https://www.merckvetmanual.com/multimedia/table/v4695641> recommends 2-4mg/kg of benadryl every 8-12 hours as needed or 1mg/kg (or 10-20mg/dog) every 12-24 hours as needed. To calculate your dog's weight in kilograms, divide the weight in pounds by 2.2. For example, a 50lb dog:  $50/2.2 = 22.7\text{kg}$ . This dog would receive 45.4-90.8mg of benadryl or 2-3 ½ pills or 20mg of zyrtec.

Consider removing fabric softeners, dryer sheets and air fresheners from your home life—they can also increase allergy sensitivity.

- 4) When it's time for a bath, shoot for the fragrance-free shampoo. Shampoos with aloe and/or oatmeal can help with moisturizing. Bathe as needed, not on a set schedule! You don't want to unnecessarily remove oils from the coat. Depending on needs, your vet may also recommend a medicated shampoo.
- 5) Other things: You can consider adding a tablespoon (50+ lbs, decrease as appropriate based on weight) of coconut oil and/or a dose of fish oil to food to help with skin health.
- 6) If you can easily do it, rubbing a small amount of coconut oil into the fur, especially after a bath, can help to moisturize. Note, other dogs may try and lick it off and it may leave marks on furniture!
- 7) Consider the Douxo protocol for dogs who regularly have skin issues—there is a full shampoo/mousse/maintenance vs flare protocol and it's all over the counter! [Find your DOUXO® S3 or DOUXO® / DOUXO® S3](#)
- 8) For hot spots, your biggest goal is to keep the area dry! If it's in a spot which can't be licked (by the dog with the problem or resident dogs), desitin can do wonders for drying it up. You can also look at any form of chlorhexidine (CHG) wipes or witch hazel. These wipes are also great for basic maintenance.
- 9) Upon vet recommendation, there are several prescription drugs you can add into your care routine—this is dog to dog specific!

Please, always feel free to reach out to Heather at [goodlifebulldogrescue@outlook.com](mailto:goodlifebulldogrescue@outlook.com) with any skin questions!