

Allergies

Allergies are one of the most common causes of skin problems in dogs, cats and horses. Dogs commonly manifest allergies with itchy skin, licking repetitively at their feet and/or recurrent ear and skin infections. Horse often get hives and can be itchy and cats can lose their hair from over grooming or cause significant self trauma as a result of allergies.

The dermatologists at the UC Davis veterinary hospital work closely with owners to try and determine what their pet is allergic to and figure out the best way to tailor therapy for that animal. This often includes evaluating for any secondary infections of the skin, treating any identified infections, looking for any evidence of external parasite problems and establishing strict ectoparasite control to meet that animal's lifestyle. Elimination diet trials can determine if an animal has a food allergy and allergy testing via skin tests or blood tests can determine what should go into allergy shots for pets proven to be allergic to pollen and molds in the environment. There are many therapies available for managing animals with skin allergies and successful management often involves finding the right combination of therapies. This is something that the dermatologists at the clinic are particularly skilled at doing.

Chronic ear infections in dogs and cats may result from ongoing allergies, but there are a number of other factors that can cause chronic ear infections. The Dermatology Service staff use video otoscopy and, if needed, CT scans to better evaluate the patient with chronic ear disease.

In addition to managing animals with skin allergies, our dermatologists can diagnose and manage auto-immune skin diseases, infectious skin diseases (fungal, bacterial, mycobacterial and viral) and many forms of skin cancer. The diagnosis of many of these diseases may require that we take a sample from the skin for culture of organisms or a biopsy for analysis by a pathologist.