

Atopy

Niles Animal Hospital and Bird Medical Center
7278 N. Milwaukee Ave. Niles, IL 60714
(847)-647-9325 FAX (847)-647-8498
www.nilesanimalhospital.com

Overview

Atopy is an itchy skin disease of animals that is caused by an allergy to substances in the environment that are contacted through the air, either by absorption through the respiratory tract or contact through the skin. Atopy is thought to be an inherited disease and is the second most common allergic skin condition in dogs; only flea allergy dermatitis is more common.

Symptoms of atopy usually begin relatively early in life, often by one year of age. Symptoms usually are seasonal at first, with most dogs showing clinical signs in the summer months when airborne allergens (such as plant pollens) are present in higher concentrations. As atopic dogs age, their symptoms tend to become less seasonal as they become allergic to more substances. Eventually, their itchiness can occur year-round.

Diagnosis and Treatment Notes:

- Atopy is generally diagnosed by a thorough history, physical examination, skin scrapings and possibly allergy testing (blood tests or intradermal testing).
- Treatment depends on the severity of the disease, your individual pet, and your veterinarian. Discuss treatment details when your pet is diagnosed with this condition.

What to Watch for*:

- Licking or chewing at skin, especially paws
- Scratching or rubbing muzzle and/or ears
- Frequent head shaking
- Red, inflamed skin

**Please notify us if you notice any of the above signs or if you have any questions!*