

Creature Comforts ~ Spring Allergy Season Can Cause Trouble for Our Dogs, Too!

By Michal Smith

The most common symptom of any allergy in dogs is itching. An allergy to flea bites is the most common type of allergy in dogs, but an allergy to something in the dog's environment, such as pollen, dust, or exposure to dust mites (actually, the feces of dust mites), is the second-most common allergy. Food allergies are surprisingly a distant third.

Owners who have eliminated flea problems with regular flea and tick elimination programs (topical drops either OTC or prescribed by the vet; sprays; regular baths etc.) and still witness the itching, biting till raw etc. should take note of the pollen counts to see if the dog's symptoms are worse as the counts rise.

Skin problems, scratching and itching are the main signs associated with pollen allergy. Signs of allergy in-

clude alopecia (hair loss) and skin lesions. Upper respiratory tract involvement is common which includes signs such as sneezing, cough, rhinitis (runny nose) and mild type of bronchitis.

Skin allergies may start during specific seasons but in some dogs it may worsen over time to become a year round problem.

An exam by a vet that includes review of the dog's symptoms alone is never enough to diagnose a dog's seasonal allergy. History and a detailed counseling with respect to management, seasonal experiences, vaccinations and habits are usually required. The owner must be aware and be able to describe seasonal effects on his/her dog. Sometimes a seasonal skin allergy is confused with flea bite dermatitis.

A test for determining a pollen allergy is just like that on humans and can be carried out by introducing pollens

or artificial histamines under shaved skin and studying the inflammatory response after a few minutes or hours. A dog can be shown to be allergic by this method.

Once it is confirmed that a dog is allergic to seasonal factors, a treatment plan can be prescribed, depending upon the cause of the allergy.

Keeping a dog inside on days when the pollen count is high, wiping down a dog with a damp towel when it comes in from outdoors or a bath in cool water can help, particularly with itch.

Other measures may include some food adjustments, such as reducing the corn, milk, chicken, beef, soy or wheat content in food. In many cases it is noted that food and seasonal allergies are correlated.

Use of some anti-allergic drugs and anti-histamines such as Benadryl work in 40% of dogs – but ask your vet for the proper dosage for your dog. In

case of skin scratching and irritation, shampoos containing gentle and soothing yet cleansing agents such as colloid Oatmeal; Coal Tar or Lidocane can be helpful.

Allergy shots are often considered the best way to prevent seasonal allergies but can be expensive.

Fish oil/fatty acid supplements can also be helpful when restoring skin condition as an addition to the diet. These types of supplements can also have a calming effect on the skin.

Creatures carries Bio Groom products for allergy relief including Oatmeal Shampoo; Coal Tar Oatmeal shampoo; Lidocane Spray as well as fish oil supplements and chews. Open 7 days a week! Mon-Fri 10-6pm; Sat 10-5pm; Sun 12-4pm PH: 503-429-PETS (7387).

Natural Path to Health ~ Chinese Five Element Theory: Part Four, Earth

By Dr. Carol McIntyre

As promised, this month we will discuss the properties associated with the Earth element. The spleen and stomach are known as the Earth elements. Many of you hear me talk about these organ systems often. I'm sure almost every one of you has heard me say, "Your liver is beating up on your spleen," at least once.

Earth is the center. Its color is yellow (like that of the earth in China). It represents BALANCE, stability, nourishment, fullness, physical structure (flesh and muscle layers), containment, and security. Mother is honored here in the Earth element as well as feeding. Blood is also represented here.

The taste of the Earth is bland/sweet. Sweetness here refers to things that are naturally sweet such as cucumbers. It does not refer to things like candy and soda pop.

Earth provides the proper soil so that you can

grow and cultivate things. It is important to always have a good foundation from which to grow. As we prepare our soil this spring in our gardens, please think about the soil that we need for our own bodies~ proper digestion is essential for any other bodily process to function properly. What you put in is what produces the energy for your physical growth! Any of you gardeners out there know that poor soil does not produce the best crop.

Think of it as the Earth being the balancing point, representing the post-natal energy (things we put in). It provides the soil for things to grow toward the Heavens. This represents the transition from Earth to Heaven. It also represents the transition of foods you put into your body that become Energy. Metabolism will process your foods into energy for your body or Qi. Finding the balance here will bring satisfaction and dismiss the desire for yearning.

Remember, Earth offers stability. Lying on the Earth is a perfect way to connect with it and become

more stable, and while doing so, connecting with the Heavens as well. Try to recall the days when you were a child, lying in the warm grass on a summer day and watching the clouds go by. If you haven't done it before, I suggest you do. The multitude of connections you feel are amazing. That is your homework for this month.

The Earth center is much more complex, but this starts you with a good overview. Next month we will discuss Metal. I do hope you are enjoying this series and finding it interesting.

A tip for all you allergy sufferers; increase your Vitamin C intake- this will help stabilize your mast cells and reduce the amount of histamine release that occurs when you do respond to an allergen. Also, remember to have a teaspoon of local honey daily- this builds your immune system to the common allergens present in our area. 'Tis the season! Thought some of you may need a little insight.

Thanks for joining me. Until we meet again~ Be Well.

WOEC Current: McLeod Retires

By Sarah Rossi

West Oregon Electric Cooperative would like to announce the retirement of Darlene McLeod after 29 years of dedicated service. Darlene has held different positions over those years, including Billing Manager, Bookkeeper, and Manager of Finance & Administration. She served under five different WOEC General Managers, and has seen a lot of changes in office equipment and our office building.

The West Oregon Electric Employees and Board of Directors would like to invite our members to share in a

special celebration to honor Darlene's retirement. It will be held Friday, May 3rd in the WOEC boardroom from 3:00-5:00 PM. Please stop by and wish Darlene well in this exciting new chapter of her life.

Also, for our member's safety we would like to warn you about a phone scam that has happened close to our area. Two of our neighboring utilities have experienced a telephone scam targeting their customers. They receive a telephone call threatening to cut off their power if an alleged past-due bill isn't paid immediately. The customers are di-

rected to purchase a pre-paid credit card and provide the number or pay via credit card. The caller may identify themselves as representing the utility. If you receive such a call, the safest thing to do is to hang up and call our office immediately at 503-429-3021 and inquire about your account and report the incident.

To help the police to catch these telephone scammers we encourage you to; note the number on the caller ID, write it down and the phone number you are asked to call with the payment information on the pre-paid credit card and any other information the caller provides.

WOEC notifies its members with written notification and a follow up automated phone call that asks the member to call the WOEC office if they are past due, but never asks for a pre-paid credit card to be purchased. We are in the process of setting up the ability to make payments online and will alert our membership when the system is up and running. If a member is having difficulty paying their bill, WOEC urges them to contact our office to arrange a payment plan or connect them with energy assistance.



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