

Seasonal Allergies: A Pet Perspective



Dr. Streeter's dog Sheba is comfortable on a grassy patch in the park

By **Jasmine Streeter, DVM**
Special to The Skanner News



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Take a walk down Tom McCall Waterfront park and the cherry trees shout that spring is officially in bloom. If you listen closely, you can hear the sneezes of humans and even pets as they enjoy the pollen infused atmosphere. According to the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America, researchers believe nearly 50 million people in the United States

allergens your pet is sensitive to, an intradermal skin test is highly recommended. A veterinarian will inject small doses of antigens under the skin and then grade the area for signs of redness. The results will tell you what types of grasses, dust, meats, molds, etc. your pet is sensitive to, so that

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are affected by allergies. Included in this count are some pet lovers who probably have a dog or cat with an allergy problem too.

An allergy occurs when the immune system reacts to a foreign substance, termed an allergen. Dogs and cats may be allergic to fleas, food or specific allergens in the environment. Atopic dermatitis (atopy) is an inherited condition where dogs or cats are allergic to pollens, molds and house dust mites when inhaled, ingested or absorbed through the skin. It is estimated that 10 percent of dogs have atopy.

Allergies can be extremely frustrating for owners who watch their fur babies suffering without relief. In addition, the annoying sound of incessant itching at night, paired with the owner's lack of sleep and irritability makes this condition a recipe for disaster. Animals with atopy usually present itchy, licking the affected area, and with red lesions or rashes on the groin, armpits, face and feet. Reverse sneezing, red eyes and a runny nose may also be seen.

Animals older than six months of age are most commonly affected with allergies. At one to three years of age, clinical signs of itching usually begin. To determine what

you can decrease contact or avoid them altogether.

If you are like me and have pets with allergies, all hope is not lost. Here are a few tips I use to prevent my fur babies from suffering through the spring. Wipe down the paw pads and body of your pet with a warm towel when they come from playing or exploring outdoors. When giving a bath, use products that contain oatmeal, chamomile or lavender to soothe irritated skin. Add omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids capsules, fish oil, safflower oil, evening primrose or linoleic acid to promote healthy skin. For mild allergies, give pediatric Benadryl dosed by weight before your pet is exposed to the allergen. If your fur baby suffers from severe allergies, visit your vet to get a prescription for a corticosteroid or allergy medication like Apoquel.

With the beautiful weather and bountiful florals before us, don't get caught off guard by allergens. There are multiple therapies that provide lasting relief for owners affected by pet allergies. Hopefully by adding these tips to your life, you and your pet find spring pleasant and delightful.

You can ask Dr. Jasmine your pet question or email your pet photo to drjasmine@theskanner.com.

Anti-Apartheid Activist Winnie Madikizela-Mandela Dies at 81

Activist remembered for determination, but also a complex legacy married by scandal

By **CHRISTOPHER TORCHIA**
Associated Press

JOHANNESBURG—Winnie Madikizela-Mandela, often referred to as Nelson Mandela's ex-wife but an anti-apartheid activist in her own right whose reputation was sullied by scandal, has died. She was 81.

The woman many South Africans once described as the "Mother of the Nation" and a champion of the Black majority, died "surrounded by her family and loved ones," according to a statement released by Madikizela-Mandela's family.

Madikizela-Mandela was the second of Mandela's three wives, married to him from 1958 to 1996.

Mandela, who died in 2013, was imprisoned throughout most of their marriage, and Madikizela-Mandela's own activism against White minority rule led to her being jailed for months and placed under house arrest for years.

"She kept the memory of her imprisoned husband Nelson Mandela alive during his years on Robben Island and helped

give the struggle for justice in South Africa one of its most recognizable faces," the family said.

However, Madikizela-Mandela's political activism was marred by her conviction in 1991 for kidnapping and assault, for which she was fined. She faced these allegations again during the 1997 hearings before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, a panel that investigated apartheid-era crimes.

As a parliamentarian after South Africa's first all-race elections, she was convicted of fraud.

Still, Madikizela-Mandela remained a venerated figure in the ruling African National Congress, which has led South Africa since the end of apartheid in 1994.

She continued to tell the party "exactly what is wrong and what is right at any time," said senior ANC leader Gwede Mantashe.

The ANC, which was the main movement against apartheid, had lost popularity in recent years in part because of scandals linked to former President Jacob Zuma, who resigned in February.

Nobel laureate and former archbishop Desmond Tutu, a periodic critic of the ruling party, noted her passing by describing Madikize-

la-Mandela as "a defining symbol" of the fight against apartheid.

"She refused to be bowed by the imprisonment of her husband, the perpetual harassment of her family by security forces, detentions, bannings and banishment," Tutu said. "Her courageous defiance was deeply inspirational to me, and to generations of activists."

Madikizela-Mandela had been in and out of hospital since the start of the year, according to her family. She had back surgery a year ago.

After hearing of her death, some people gathered Monday evening outside Madikizela-Mandela's home in the Soweto area of Johannesburg to sing tributes. She had attended Easter services in Soweto over the long weekend.

The family said it will release details of her memorial and funeral services when they are finalized.

Madikizela-Mandela's story was told in biographies and novels as well the Hollywood movie "Winnie," starring Oscar-winning actress and singer Jennifer Hudson.

The young Winnie grew up in what is now Eastern Cape prov-

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