

# Hyposensitization of animals with atopic dermatitis

These are questions frequently asked by animal owners and veterinarians:

## How good is the chance of improvement with hyposensitization?

A satisfactory effect has been recorded in about 70% of cases.

## Is it enough to desensitize animals, or are other treatments still necessary?

An animal with atopic dermatitis or with allergic lung problems will initially need intensive therapy to control the lesions caused by itching and scratching (skin changes in many variations) or to improve the respiratory symptoms. The pruritus or desire to scratch/lick, is the main symptom of atopy and disappears with hyposensitization therapy.

## How long will it take before the animal is getting better?

As long as the secondary skin problems are under control, the pruritus will disappear within 1-2 months of therapy. Should this therapy be terminated, the pruritus returns within 1-3 months.

## How often must the animal be injected?

In the beginning the animal will be injected once a week with 1 or 2 applications depending on allergen combination. Later, intervals between injections increase. Usually the maintenance regimen is one injection per month.

## How long does the therapy last? Will the animal be healed?

According to American literature, the animals should be treated for life. The allergens we use have been shown to achieve healing in people. We have not used these allergens long enough yet to claim successful results in animals. The therapy must be carried out for at least 3-4 years.

## Are there side effects?

To date there have been no significant side effects reported with the exception of a few patients which did not tolerate larger quantities of allergen and responded with intensive itching. Should this occur the dose must be individually adjusted. The administration of short acting cortisones suppresses this allergic reaction.

## What are the costs?

The hyposensitization solution(s) cost around 200 Euro per year.

## What should I do if my animal is still scratching or coughing despite therapy?

If the concentration of (naturally occurring) allergens is too high (massive pollen release, vacuuming the house) pruritus or coughing can be rekindled. Usually these outbreaks can be controlled with shampooing and moderate dosing of cortisone.

## During the first few weeks the animal was much better, but now the symptoms are much more intensively, especially after injection!

A few patients can not tolerate the maximal dose of allergen in the Hyposensitization solution. In these cases, the dosage must be individually adjusted.

**The animal is better, but shows symptoms again before the next injection is due!**

The animals need a larger dose of allergen than usual. In this case the maintenance dose must be given in shorter intervals (every 2-3 weeks).

**The therapy with the start solution went very well, but now with the maintenance solution, the symptoms come back!**

The solution No 3 of the initial treatment set is applied only after 2-3 months. During this time the allergen concentration is diminishing, even with the solutions stored in the refrigerator. When the patient is injected with a recently produced solution, the allergen content can be at intolerable high levels. The animals show again clinical symptoms as scratching, skin reddening or coughing. These reactions can quickly be controlled with cortisone. In order to avoid such reactions, it is advisable to inject not 0,8ml but 0,1ml of the fresh solution and to observe the dog carefully in the following hours. When no reactions are noted, the full dose (0,8ml) can be injected the following week.

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