

Allergies Explained

Family Matters

One of the most frustrating conditions for both pets and their families is allergies.

They often don't threaten life, but they can certainly affect quality of life.

An itchy dog that never stops scratching.

A cat constantly over-grooming.

Recurring ear infections.

Red, inflamed skin.

If this sounds familiar, you're not alone.

At Amity, we believe allergies are best managed by understanding **the underlying cause**, not simply treating the symptoms. Our purpose is to **Empower You Through Education**, helping you understand why allergies occur and how we can help your pet live a happier, more comfortable life.

What Is an Allergy?

An allergy occurs when your pet's immune system overreacts to something that would normally be harmless.

Instead of ignoring the substance, the immune system responds excessively, causing inflammation and irritation.

The result is often persistent itching, skin infections or ear problems.

What Can Pets Be Allergic To?

The three most common categories are:

- Environmental allergens (such as pollen, house dust mites and moulds).
- Flea saliva.
- Food ingredients.

Many owners assume food is the most likely cause.

In reality, **environmental allergies are far more common**.

Determining the true cause is one of the biggest challenges—and one of the most important steps in managing the problem successfully.

Allergies Are Managed, Not Cured

This is one of the most important things to understand.

For the vast majority of pets, allergies are **a lifelong condition**.

Just like hay fever or eczema in people, there is usually **no permanent cure**. Even when symptoms improve dramatically, the underlying allergy remains.

Our goal isn't to cure allergies—it's to **manage** them.

Good management means reducing flare-ups, controlling itching, preventing ear and skin infections, and helping your pet enjoy an excellent quality of life.

Many allergic pets live happy, comfortable lives because their allergies are well managed.

Reducing Pollen Exposure

If your pet has environmental allergies, particularly to pollen, reducing the amount of pollen left on their skin can make a real difference.

After walks, wiping your pet down with a **damp towel** can help remove pollen before it has time to irritate the skin. Pay particular attention to the **feet (including between the toes), armpits, muzzle, belly and groin**, where pollen commonly collects.

There's a big difference between your pet picking up pollen during a walk and that pollen remaining on the skin, effectively **marinating overnight**. Removing it promptly can reduce the overall pollen burden and, for some pets, help reduce itchiness and flare-ups.

What Are the Signs?

Allergies don't always look the same.

Common signs include:

- Persistent scratching.
- Licking or chewing the feet.
- Recurrent ear infections.
- Red or inflamed skin.
- Hair loss.
- Over-grooming.
- Skin infections.
- Rubbing the face.

Unlike people, pets with allergies usually become **itchy** rather than sneezy.

How Are Allergies Diagnosed?

Diagnosing allergies often requires patience.

We'll begin by taking a detailed history and examining your pet.

Depending on the signs, we may recommend ruling out parasites, treating skin or ear infections, performing cytology, or carrying out a food trial if a food allergy is suspected.

Sometimes the diagnosis comes from systematically excluding other causes rather than a single definitive test.

How Are Allergies Managed?

Management depends on the underlying cause and the severity of the symptoms.

Options may include:

- Excellent flea control.
- Medicated shampoos.
- Ear treatment.
- Antibiotics or antifungal medication if infection is present.
- Prescription diets.
- Anti-itch medication.
- Immunotherapy in selected cases.

Every pet is different, so management is tailored to the individual.

Our aim is always to use the **least medication necessary** while keeping your pet comfortable.

Comfort Comes First

Living with constant itching is exhausting.

It affects sleep, behaviour and quality of life.

At Amity, we'll work with you to develop a long-term management plan, adjusting it as your pet's needs change over time.

Because successful allergy care isn't about finding a cure.

It's about finding the right management plan.

Because they're not just your pet.

They're family.

Family Matters.

If you need more information, book an appointment with an Amity vet. We're here to Empower You Through Education and help you become your pet's greatest advocate.