

Atopic dermatitis is an incurable disease that requires continuous and lifelong treatment.

Diagnosis:

A diagnosis of atopic dermatitis (“allergy”) is usually reached based on a number of factors:

- Usually starts between six months and three years of age.
- Certain breeds are more commonly affected.
- Areas affected usually include one or more of the following - chin, face, muzzle, ears, feet, armpits, tummy and perineum.
- Red skin is usually visible, especially as disease progresses.
- Parasitic infestation must have been ruled out.
- Secondary bacterial and yeast infections must be identified and treated.
- Dietary allergies and intolerances must have been ruled out.
- A positive allergy testing is final confirmation.

Considerations before investigation and treatment:

- It is an incurable disease.
- It requires continuous and lifelong treatment.
- There will be some degree of lifelong expense.
- There is no single treatment that is perfect - all potential treatments have advantages and disadvantages.
- Patients commonly have flare-ups that require veterinary visits.

Treatment options:

An individual patient treatment plan will need to be selected, based on the following considerations:

- Effectiveness of treatment(s).
- Risk of side effects.
- Cost of drugs.

Treatments currently available:

- **Specific:**
 - Allergen avoidance
 - Allergen specific immunotherapy
- **Non-specific (symptomatic):**
 - Glucocorticoids
 - Ciclosporin
 - Antihistamines
 - Essential fatty acids
 - Chinese herbs
 - Medicated shampoos
 - Antibiotics to control secondary infections



Patients suffering from this condition can be frustrating cases to diagnose and treat successfully. We therefore sometimes recommend referring your pet to a veterinary dermatologist. Currently we have a veterinary dermatologist (Paul Coward) who holds a clinic at Endell Veterinary Group once a month. Please let your veterinary surgeon know if you would like your pet referred to him.

Summary:

Treatment	Effectiveness	Risk of Side Effects	Approximate Costs Per Month
Allergen Avoidance	Low	None	Free
Immunotherapy	65%	Rare	£25-£30
Glucocorticoids	Nearly 100%	Can cause major side effects when used for months/years	£5-15
Ciclosporin	80%	Can cause minor side effects; long term effects not known	£100-£500
Antihistamines	20%	Rare	£10-£25
EFA	20%	Rare	£15-£40
Chinese Herbs	20%	May cause stomach upsets	£30-£100
Medicated Shampoo	Helpful to treat and prevent infection and soothe skin	May occasionally irritate the skin	£10-£30
Antibiotics/Ear Drops	Effective when infection present	May cause stomach upsets; major side effects not known	£20-£25

Please note that prices are a guide only.



Quick Reference Guide



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