

TREATMENT FOR WESTIES WITH SEVERE SKIN ISSUES

Updated 5/4/15

Our vet is Dr. Brad Theodoroff at Animal Medical Center of Troy 248-852-9800

Generally when a dog comes into Rescue and is having allergy/skin issues, we take him to see Dr. Theodoroff. Following is a general description of the things that are usually done to help the dog. When these procedures are followed, we have a very high success rate.

Dr. T. checks the dog over.

- checks for fleas; if present, then treats for adult fleas with Capstar, and or Parastar Plus.
- both ear canals tested for yeast, bacteria and mites
- tape prep of skin sores and feet for bacteria and yeast
- skin scraping to check for mites
- blood panel, heartworm testing, fecal testing
- all dogs are started on Sentinel for flea and heartworm prevention, and hookworm, whipworm and round worm treatment and prevention
- thyroid panel if the dog has the look of a dog with thyroid issues (unusual)

Most Recues with skin disease or itch are suffering from Atopic Dermatitis. In human medicine, the common name for Atopic Dermatitis is eczema. Recently, there is emerging evidence that the inflammation in Atopic Dermatitis results primarily from inherited abnormalities in the skin - a skin "barrier defect". This barrier failure causes increased permeability of the skin and reduces its antimicrobial function. Additionally, the "barrier defect" means that Water is lost; Irritants (soap, detergent, solvents, dirt) and Allergens (pollens, dust-mite antigen, microbes) may penetrate through the skin "barrier defect".

Dr. T. usually recommends the itchy dog start on Hill's J/D food which has lots of Omega 3 fatty acids and can often provide enough support for the mildly allergic dog without going into the steps below. Additionally the Omega 3's are powerful antioxidants and have anti-inflammatory functions that aid in skin health and healing. The Omega 3's are thought to help restore or improve the disrupted skin barrier and do help the skin retain moisture. J/D has more Omega 3's than the skin and allergy diets. Every cup of J/D is the equivalent of a cup of DermCaps and has more Omega #'s than any other supplement. (No, this isn't a typo.....Yes, J/D is a joint disease food but it is what we use for the skin/allergy issues.)

Dr. T. usually will apply Revolution at the time and then again in 2 weeks time just in case there are undetected Sarcoptic mites (mange).

He will often give us

- antibiotics if he feels they are appropriate and always if steroids are used (Simplicef, Clavamox, Zeniquin or Baytril are the typical antibiotics used) Note: There is now an antibiotic injection, Convenia, that we use; it is more expensive but one less thing to give orally. Convenia last for 2 weeks. Many Rescues will need to be on antibiotics for 4 to 6 weeks, sometimes even longer!
- ketoconazole tablets, rinses and or creams may be use if yeast is present in high numbers
- **Apoquel for itch control.** To manage the itch that is present, we **had been using** a single steroid Dexamethasone Sodium Phosphate(Dex SP) shot that last around 1 week (sometimes followed by another but not always). Sometimes an injection of Tiamcinolone, a stronger and longer lasting steroid is given. Stronger and longer does not mean better since steroids have profound effects on the immune system and long-term health for our Rescues. Then we switched to Atopica and used that for many years.

- Now we are using a new (Nov 2013) revolutionary medication, Apoquel (Oclacitinib Maleate). Apoquel, provides onset of relief within 4 hours and effectively controls itch in 24 hours. It works as fast as steroids with none of the side effects we see with short or long term use of steroids. Apoquel, is a Janus kinase (JAK-1) inhibitor that blocks the cytokines including interleukin (IL)2, 4, 6,13 and 31. While all these ILs play a role in allergic dermatitis, IL31 has been shown to play a key role in generating and transmitting the neurologic itch signal to the brain that tells a dog to scratch. Apoquel does not inhibit other JAK enzymes in the body when used as directed. JAK-2 play important role in the blood production and innate immune system.
- Apoquel is dosed at .04 to .06 mg/Kg 2x/day for up to 14 days, then is given once, day, every day as needed. Dogs have been on Apoquel for up to 2 years now without any side effects noted.
- Apoquel is licensed to control "pruritus associated with allergic dermatitis and control atopic dermatitis in dogs at least 12 months of age".
- Flea bite allergy, Food Allergy, Contact Allergy (hotspots) and Atopic Disease all cause allergic itch. Apoquel is indicated in all these cases
- Apoquel is only for dogs over 1 year of age that do not have cancer or serious infection (pneumonia, kidney, pyometra, demodicosis). It is fine with skin infection, if it is properly diagnosed and being treated.
- Apoquel has replaced Atopica for the long term treatment of allergy. It works faster, and costs less. Additionally, Apoquel will not irritate the GI or cause gingival hyperplasia we saw with Atopica.
- We now can control the dog's itch with Apoquel and still have intradermal skin testing or allergen-specific blood testing. It also seems to be fine to use while getting allergic hyposensitization treatment. (Allergy shots)
- <https://online.zoetis.com/US/EN/Products/Pages/apoqueldvm/Index.aspx>
- Note: Putting a tight t shirt on the dog will keep the dog from traumatizing the skin from scratching. They also seem to feel less of a need to scratch when wearing the shirt.

Note: Dogs that have ear infections will require ear drops such as Mometamax or Baytril. Medication is selected based on what is seen on the ear canal testing.



When she came in



Roxie now

Roxie came in with pretty severe skin issues. Atopica took her a long way. But Apoquel has further improved her skin and well being. And she no longer has to deal with side effects.

1/2014