

NOVEMBER 2024



# SITS & WIGGLES

The Newsletter of the Animal Clinic of Chardon

WHAT'S INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

*Thanksgiving Pet Safety Tips*

*Managing Your Dog's  
Seasonal Allergies*



## THANKSGIVING PET SAFETY TIPS

Thanksgiving is a holiday that's centered around family and food. While it's tempting to include the furry members of our family in the feast, many aspects of Thanksgiving can put pets in danger (so put down that turkey leg)! Here are some tips to keep your pet safe on Thanksgiving.

### Thanksgiving Food Dangers for Dogs and Cats

It can be tempting for you and your guests to sneak the family pet a taste of the delicious meal, but common Thanksgiving dishes are full of ingredients that are toxic to dogs and cats or can cause digestive upset.

Keep your pet away from these dangerous festive foods:

- Turkey. Avoid giving your pet turkey meat, especially fatty dark meat and skin (a small amount of unseasoned white meat is okay), and never give them any leftover bones. Not only are bones a choking hazard, but they can splinter inside your pet's digestive tract and cause a trip to the emergency vet.
- Garlic, onion, leeks, and chives. These seasonings are common in many Thanksgiving dishes and are toxic to dogs and cats – they can cause destruction of their red blood cells. Avoid giving your pet a bite of anything cooked with these ingredients, like green beans, potatoes, stuffing, or gravy.

(Continued on next page)



## THANKSGIVING PET SAFETY TIPS (CONT)

- Unbaked dough containing yeast. Unbaked yeast dough can cause a stomach blockage if eaten because the yeast in the dough makes it rise and expand. Plus, the natural fermentation of the yeast in your cat or dog's stomach can cause alcohol poisoning. If you plan on baking some delicious dinner rolls for Thanksgiving, make sure to proof your dough somewhere that your pet can't get to it, such as in a turned-off oven or microwave, not right on the counter where it's often in your pet's easy reach.
- Desserts. Desserts like pies, fruitcakes, or cookies should be kept out of your pet's reach as well. Many people know that chocolate is toxic for dogs and cats, but so are raisins, currants, and the popular sugar-substitute xylitol. Xylitol, even in small amounts, is toxic to dogs, so keep that slice of keto-friendly/diabetic-friendly/sugar-free pie to yourself.



Not only do you not want to give your pets any toxic foods, but you want to make sure they don't decide to dive into the trash in search of yummy scraps. Ask family and guests to not feed the dog and make sure your trash can is secure.

### Feed Them Pet-Friendly Food Options Instead

While the list of foods to avoid might seem overwhelming, there are a few great options for some pet-friendly Thanksgiving treats. Raw fruits and vegetables like baby carrots, green beans, apples, chunks of sweet potato, or pumpkin puree (not the sweetened, spiced pie filling) are great options

### Secure Your Home

With family and friends coming and going over Thanksgiving weekend, make sure that your cat or dog doesn't find their way out that open front door and get lost. Set up gates to help keep your dog away from the front door when guests come and go (as well as prevent the chaos of a jumping or barking dog at the door) or keep them on leash to prevent any door dashing. Keep your cat in a separate room with the door closed so they don't escape into the great outdoors.

### Keep Your Pets Away from Guest's Bags

Along with houseguests comes everything they carry with them, and handbags, backpacks or suitcases can be possible hazards for your pets if they stick their noses where they don't belong. Things like sugar-free xylitol gum, candy bars, and human medication can really put a damper on your holiday plans if ingested by your pet. Have guests hang their bags on hooks rather than leaving them on the floor and keep the guest room door closed to protect your pets.

By practicing these Thanksgiving pet safety tips, you and your pet can enjoy a safe and happy holiday. Written by Dr. Melody R. Conklin

Online  
Store  
Promotions



### It's National Animal Shelter Appreciation Week

Save 15% with code **15APPRECIATE** and consider purchasing items to donate to a shelter

Use code 15APPRECIATE - valid for a one-time purchase through our online store. Compounded medications not included. Other restrictions apply. Valid 11/15/24 - 11/18/24



We're feeling thankful for you  
and your fur family!

## Here's 20% off

Use code: **20THANKS**

Use code 20THANKS - valid for a one-time purchase through our online store. Compounded medications not included. Other restrictions apply. Valid 11/18/24 - 12/2/24

# MANAGING YOUR DOG'S SEASONAL ALLERGIES

Did you know that dogs can get seasonal allergies just like humans? It's true! Seasonal allergies in dogs usually manifest as itchy skin, but there are other telltale reactions. For instance, if your pooch has a runny nose, is excessively scratching, or just acting a bit off, it could very well be allergies.

Here are some ways you can identify seasonal allergies in dogs, as well as tips for getting your pet back up and running should they fall under the weather.

## Signs of Dog Seasonal Allergies

The reactions dogs have to allergens are slightly different from those of humans. Itchy skin and recurrent ear infections are the most common signs of seasonal allergies in dogs, but your pet may also experience red, swollen eyes, a clear, runny nose and fits of sneezing.

The itchiness your pet may experience can range from intense to mild, and is most likely to occur in the armpit, groin, muzzle or paw regions. Note: Dogs can scratch themselves raw. So if you notice them scratching, rubbing on carpet or furniture, chewing or licking themselves more than normal, it's worth taking them to see a veterinarian. This behavior can lead to painful infections — signs of which include unusual odor and discharge — that will require treatment.

## What Causes Dog Seasonal Allergies?

Seasonal allergies in dogs occur when they inhale or come in contact with something that they're sensitive to. Going a little deeper: allergies happen when the immune system becomes less tolerant of an allergen. After that, any time the immune system encounters that allergen in the environment, it goes haywire with an inflammatory response that causes all or some of the reactions mentioned above.

Seasonal allergies are brought on by factors only present during specific times of the year, such as tree and grass pollen, dust and dust mites, mold and mold mites, flea bites and fresh grass in the fall or summer.

## How Are Seasonal Allergies in Dogs Diagnosed?

Your vet can tell you for sure if your dog is experiencing seasonal allergies or something else, based upon your pet's history, a physical exam, laboratory tests and their response to therapy. You can also take your dog to a dermatologist for skin testing — another accurate method for diagnosing seasonal allergies.

Skin testing is usually performed by a board-certified veterinary dermatologist, who measures your pet's reaction to microdoses of different allergens to determine exactly which they're allergic to. Using this information, they can make a serum for allergy shots that may make your dog's response to allergens less intense over time.

Blood testing is another route to consider, although skin testing is considered the more accurate approach. (Continued on next page)

**“Pets are humanizing. They remind us we have an obligation and responsibility to preserve and nurture and care for all life.” – James Cromwell**

## ACOC Birthdays

**Josey - 11/8**  
**Michaela - 11/17**  
**Hallie- 11/18**



# MANAGING YOUR DOG'S SEASONAL ALLERGIES (CONTINUED)

## Managing Dog Seasonal Allergies With Medication

One way to manage seasonal allergies in dogs is by using the allergy serum prescribed by your dog's dermatologist. This requires a series of allergen injections that slowly increase in dose over time. The needle you'll use is very small, but you can perform these injections at home with professional guidance.

Allergy injections tend to have low levels of side effects, which can make them a good option for dogs with moderate to severe allergies.

If your dog only has mild seasonal allergies, they may respond well to several over-the-counter and at-home remedies, such as antihistamines.

Oral prescription medications are another option. Anti-itch medicine that can work quickly and can be discontinued without negative side effects could be an option for your dog. There are even medications that modulates the immune system's response to allergens. Both are available via prescription from your local veterinarian and require annual examinations and/or blood work.



Both of these types prescription medications have side effects, so be sure to talk with your vet about how taking them could impact your dog's health. In general, it's always a good idea to ask your vet before introducing anything new to your dog's system — especially with over-the-counter medicine — so you can give your pet the option and dosage best for their unique needs.

## Managing Dog Seasonal Allergies With Nutrition

Another option for treating your dog's seasonal allergies is through nutrition. Certain therapeutic dog foods are specially formulated to help manage your dog's skin allergies. These can be an excellent option to supplement or even replace the need for more expensive medications. The best part? It's as easy as feeding your dog as you normally would! Be sure to talk to your veterinarian if there are nutritional options for your dog. Make sure to properly transition your dog's food if a therapeutic food is recommended by your veterinarian.



### How to Keep a Dog's Seasonal Allergies at Bay

You'll also want to limit your dog's exposure to allergens. After outside playtime, use a baby wipe on their underside, paws and legs before letting them inside; this can remove allergens from your dog's skin.

Weekly baths with oatmeal shampoos can also be helpful, but make sure the water is lukewarm, as hot water can dry and irritate their skin. Dogs tend to respond well to a bath with a medicated shampoo that contains antihistamines or steroids. Prescription-strength lotions and sprays are also available.

While seasonal allergies are a thing every single year, their impact on your dog's well-being can be reduced with proper treatment and active prevention measures. Not every approach will be right for every dog, but with a little trial and error, you can figure out how to keep seasonal allergies from slowing your pet down.

Written by Dr. Sarah Wooten