

## What causes an allergy?

Allergies are caused by certain common substances in the environment known as "allergens". These allergens include the pollens of various grasses, weeds, trees, mold spores, house dust, dust mites, and a variety of other substances including foods. Exposure to an allergen can be from inhalation, skin contact, or ingestion. Once your pet is exposed to an offending allergen, sensitivity is established and then every time your pet is exposed to the allergen, a reaction may occur.

## How do pets show allergic symptoms?

Symptoms can be highly variable. Some of the symptoms associated with allergy include itchy feet, ears, inflammation of the skin, persistent scratching, chewing and face rubbing. Some pets lose hair and may experience rashes that can lead to secondary skin infections.



## How can I tell if my pet is allergic?

Your veterinarian can conduct an examination to determine whether your pet is being affected by an allergen. He/She will ask questions about the pet's history, environment and symptoms. A simple test can be performed on a small sample of blood submitted to Nelco Vet for analysis. Your pet's serum will be tested for a variety of inhalants, such as tree, grass and weed pollens, fungi, house dust and mites that are specific to the region in which you live. Foods commonly found in your pet's diet can also be tested.

## What is the best course of therapy for my pet?

Your veterinarian is best qualified to discuss treatment options once it is determined that your pet is allergic. Avoidance of the allergens is preferred, but may not be practical or possible. Medications, including steroids and antihistamines may temporarily relieve symptoms, but are not recommended for prolonged use. Hyposensitization or immunotherapy is the most natural and safe way to control allergies.

## What is hyposensitization?

Your veterinarian may recommend hyposensitization, also referred to as immunotherapy or "allergy shots". Once the pet's allergies are identified, a mixture of specifically prescribed allergens is formulated. This "allergy extract" is made up of the offending allergens and is given in small doses that are gradually increased over time. The extract reduces the sensitivity of the pet to those allergens. In this manner, allergic symptoms are controlled without the undesirable effects of corticosteroids and similar drugs.

## How effective is this form of treatment?

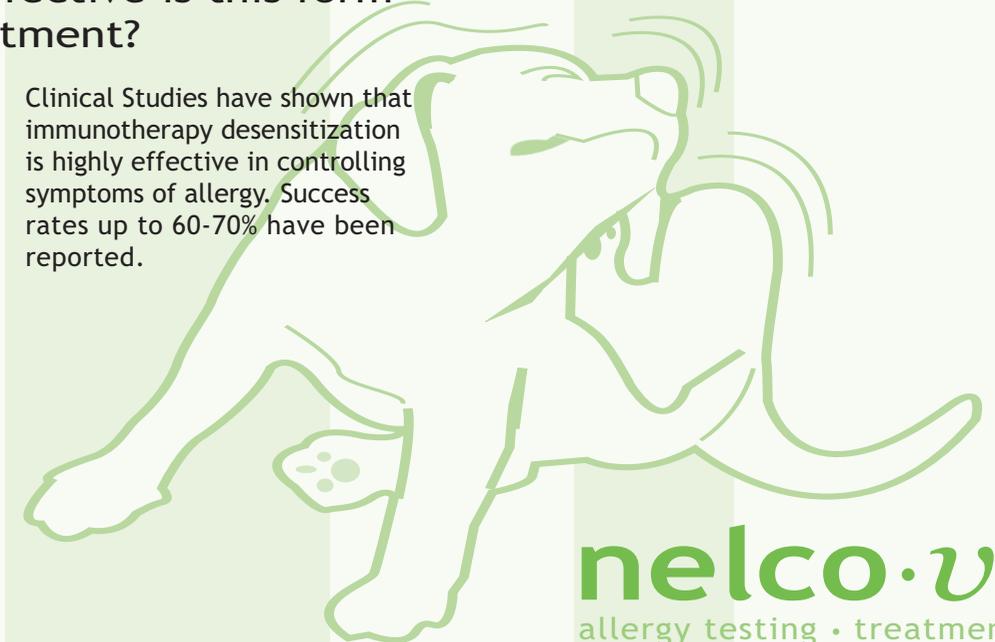
Clinical Studies have shown that immunotherapy desensitization is highly effective in controlling symptoms of allergy. Success rates up to 60-70% have been reported.

## When will my pet improve?

Pets progress at different rates. Many will show significant improvement in 6 months. But others will take up to one year before improvement is noted. It is critical, therefore, that treatment be continued for at least one year.

## How long will my pet need allergy injections?

Allergies can last throughout the lifetime of your pet. It is important to understand that allergies may never be cured, but they can be controlled. As long as symptoms persist, injections may be necessary.



## Are there any dangers involved?

Adverse reactions to allergenic extracts are extremely rare but may occur during the initial phase of immunotherapy. Usually a simple adjustment to the dosage schedule is required. Extracts provided through NELCO VET are USDA LICENSED.



## What about food allergies?

Since dogs and cats cannot be hyposensitized to foods, the best way to manage food allergies is avoidance. Nelco Vet can provide your veterinarian a computerized list of commercially available foods that would be appropriate for your pet.

## What if my pet goes untreated?

The uncomfortable itchy skin that your pet will experience can lead to a secondary skin infection that can cause severe damage to the skin. Your pet may experience rashes and hair loss due to self-trauma brought on by scratching, rubbing, licking and chewing. These symptoms will remain if untreated and will worsen as your pet ages.

## How can I help the doctor?

Your role in the diagnosis and treatment of allergic disorders is essential. Your doctor will need a complete history of your pet's problems. This will include an environmental analysis of indoor/ outdoor inhalant allergens along with an analysis of your pet's diet. It is important to determine what triggers your pet's sensitivity and how much exposure to allergens your pet may be experiencing. Your personal observation of your pet will help the veterinarian correlate your symptoms with a diagnosis.

## Allergy Testing and Treatment Provided by your Veterinarian

Through

**Nelco Vet**  
for Testing (Diagnosis)

and

**Nelco Labs**  
for Treatment (Immunotherapy)  
Over 30 years experience

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Deer Park, NY 11729

Doctor info:

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## Can my pet really be allergic?



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