

# PIKE MOOR VETERINARY SURGEONS

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## ATOPY - Atopic Dermatitis

Atopic dermatitis is caused by an allergy to environmental substances called **allergens**. We are unable to cure allergies, and although we can manage them, your pet will require lifelong treatment to keep its condition under control. The ideal way to manage an allergy is prevent all contact with the offending allergens. Most of them are difficult to avoid but despite this there are steps you can take to reduce your pet's exposure. Most allergens belong to one of the following groups:-

- House dust and forage mites
- Insects
- Moulds
- Danders and fibres
- Pollens

### • HOUSE DUST AND FORAGE MITES

#### Cleaning and vacuuming

Keep pets out of rooms for 2-3 hours after vacuuming, preferably using a vacuum cleaner with an allergen filter. (eg Dysons)

Ventilate and air rooms well to reduce humidity and keep indoor temperature below 22°C.

Wash pet's beddings and toys weekly at 40-60°C.

Avoid old and dusty foods, keep dry foods in sealed plastic containers.

#### Bedrooms and bedding

Keep pets out of bedrooms \*\*\* *very important* \*\*\* and also away from bedding eg in laundry room, airing cupboard etc.

Use a solid plastic pet bed with a washable blanket or enclose quilt in a plastic bag under a washable cover.

#### Carpets and furnishings

Avoid carpets if at all possible, use a steam cleaner regularly but air room afterwards to reduce the humidity.

Mop down room where pet spends most time with a damp cloth to remove dust.

Avoid stuffed or fabric upholstered furniture and toys.

#### Anti-mite treatments

There are a number of anti-mite treatments that can be used in houses. These are often designed for use by human asthmatics. Some prescription environmental flea sprays (eg Vet-Kem Acclaim, Indorex) also reduce mite numbers. It is important to follow the instructions carefully. Note that "dead" house dust mites are just as antigenic as "live" ones so this is not a substitute for vacuuming.

### • DANDERS AND FIBRES

Cat dander (small particles of skin scale) is often found in houses *without cats!* It is small and stable entering through doors, windows and on clothes. Control as for house dust mites.

Avoid feather pillows, birds etc. - Avoid blankets, sheets, rugs, carpets, bedding, etc.

### • INSECTS

Flea allergic dermatitis is one of the commonest skin conditions.

Use an effective flea product eg Frontline, Stronghold, Program, Advantage.

### • POLLENS

Avoid fields during pollen season (check pollen counts at [www.polleninfo.org](http://www.polleninfo.org))

Rinse off with water after exercise.

Keep your lawn mown very short - keep pets off whilst mowing.

Keep pets indoors in early morning and early evening, especially if there is a high pollen count.

Consider using an air conditioner.

Avoid having flowering plants indoors or situated near doors or windows.

### • MOULDS

Avoid old and dusty foods - Avoid having houseplants.

Avoid damp rooms - cellars, bathrooms, laundry rooms, barns, sheds etc.

Use a dehumidifier - remember to clean and disinfect regularly.

Keep away from wood stores, wickerwork etc.

Use chlorine bleach solutions to clean affected surfaces.