

SPRING 2012

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# FOR *Pets* SAKE

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A NEWSLETTER OF ALOHA ANIMAL HOSPITAL ASSOCIATES



## SLEUTHING ALLERGIES: Deducing "Whodunit" Is Key to Offering Relief

When people's allergies act up, you can't help but notice the symptoms: they're sneezing or they break into a rash, and they usually look miserable. With pets, however, the symptoms may not be as apparent. Different types of pets may also have different reactions to the same allergens.

Typically, allergies develop in the first three years of life and get progressively worse with time. A good rule of thumb in searching for symptoms in your pet is to check the "F-Places."

The three most common allergies for dogs and cats are:  
1) flea bite allergies 2) inhalant allergies 3) food allergies

Flea bite allergies are the most common and show up as hair loss, itchiness, and crusts over the center of the back, the rump, and the back of the thighs.

Inhalant and food allergies look similar and show up in the F - places.

## Search For Clues In The "F-Places"

### FACE

(eyes, ears, and mouth)

#### APPEARANCE

Muzzle, chin, and areas around eyes reddened with hair loss; redness, and/or waxy discharge/odor from ears

#### BEHAVIOR

Scratching or rubbing face with paws or against furniture; running nose along carpet

### FOLDS

(in the neck, elbows, or armpits)

#### APPEARANCE

Reddened; crusted and scaled; odor from secondary infections

#### BEHAVIOR

Scratching and licking affected areas

### FLANKS

(the abdomen)

#### APPEARANCE

Bald spots; brown discoloration where licking has occurred

#### BEHAVIOR

Scratching and licking sides and/or belly; rubbing against furniture or carpet

### FEET

#### APPEARANCE

Inflammation, redness, odor; brown discoloration where licking has occurred

#### BEHAVIOR



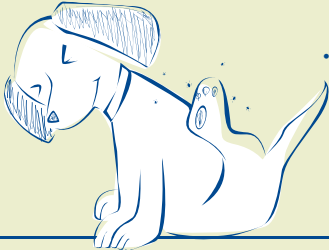
Licking and chewing feet and/or pads



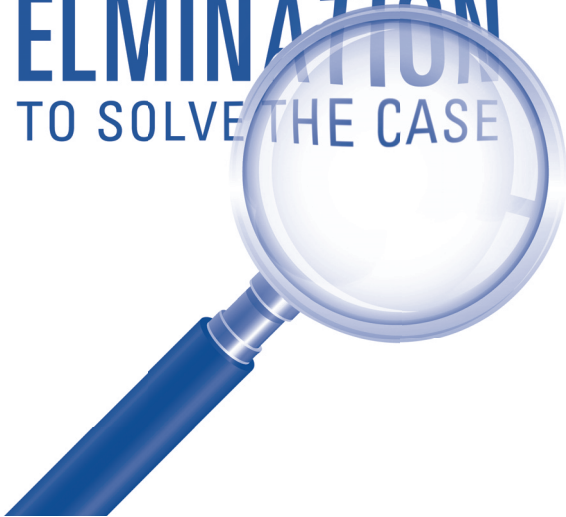
Overall, the most common allergies are caused by fleas. This is especially true here in Hawaii where the tropical weather nurtures their growth. The second most common grouping is airborne, and the third is food allergies.

As you search the F-Places, review your “Sleuther’s Notebook” on the three, most common pet allergies and their remedies:

### Sleuther’s Notebook: The 3 Most Common Pet Allergies

ALLERGY	SYMPTOMS	KEY AREAS	IRRITANTS	REMEDIES
<b>FLEAS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Most common</li><li>• Pervasive – each flea lays 40-50 eggs per day</li><li>• Fleas constantly feed; each feeding is a new bite</li></ul>	 <b>Cats</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Not as recognizable, as bleeding is minimal</li><li>• Hair loss</li><li>• Extra grooming</li></ul>  <b>Dogs</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Excessive biting, chewing and scratching</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Center of the back</li><li>• Rump</li><li>• Inner and/or back of thighs</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Saliva from flea bites</li></ul> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Bathing in cool water – heat stimulates itching</li><li>• Applying an anti-inflammatory/anti-itch agent to infected areas</li><li>• “Breaking the cycle” with monthly flea control products and an insect growth regulator</li></ul>
<b>AIRBORNE ATOPY</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Also common</li><li>• Often seasonal: Fall and April/May</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Chewing at the feet</li><li>• Constant licking of the flank (side) and groin area</li><li>• Rubbing of the face</li><li>• Inflamed ears or recurrent ear infections</li><li>• Recurrent hot spots in dogs; pin-point facial scrubbing in cats</li><li>• Asthma-like wheezing and respiratory problems (more likely in cats)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Feet</li><li>• Flank</li><li>• Groin area</li><li>• Ears</li><li>• Throat (wheezing)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Dust and dust mites</li><li>• Cockroach dander</li><li>• Pollen</li><li>• Mold</li><li>• Cotton</li><li>• Human skin</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use supplements, shampoos, and medicated sprays as prescribed.</li><li>• Aloha Animal Hospital may also recommend allergy shots and immune system drugs.</li></ul>
<b>FOOD-RELATED</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Accounts for 10-15% of all allergies in dogs and cats</li><li>• Should not be confused with food intolerances, which generally cause diarrhea and vomiting.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Itching, especially face, feet, trunk, limbs, anal area</li><li>• Ear problems; often yeast-related</li><li>• Recurring skin infections</li><li>• Occasionally, dogs with food allergies may have increased bowel movements and soft stool</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Face</li><li>• Feet</li><li>• Trunk</li><li>• Limbs</li><li>• Anal area</li><li>• Ear</li><li>• Skin</li></ul>	<p>The most common allergies result from ingredients found in many pet foods and treats!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Beef</li><li>• Dairy</li><li>• Chicken</li><li>• Wheat</li><li>• Corn</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Start an “Elimination Diet” to remove the allergen over a two-month (6-8 weeks) period.</li><li>• Withhold treats and dry foods such as salmon &amp; potato (with Omega 3 mixed-in for healthy skin), and pinto beans &amp; yams; or, “altered foods” that chemically isolate the offending molecules.</li></ul> <p><i>Want a recipe for homemade, non-allergenic dog food? Go to <a href="http://www.AlohaAnimal.com">www.AlohaAnimal.com</a></i></p>

### USE THE PROCESS OF ELIMINATION TO SOLVE THE CASE



- 1 Analyze the affected areas. Cross-check symptoms with the guide, above. Speak with Aloha Animal Hospital.
- 2 Rule out flea allergies with a full flea treatment for your home and pet. This takes persistence and patience. (For more information about stopping the flea cycle, go to our website to learn how one local family fought fleas and won).
- 3 Still flaring up? Move to the “Airborne” section.
- 4 Have a skin test done to determine the type of allergy.
- 5 Have the pet treated with medication.
- 6 Still flaring up? Move to the “Food-related” section.
- 7 Start an elimination diet. This will result in three possible outcomes:
  - a. Condition same/worse, you’ve got the wrong food or allergy type.
  - b. Slight improvement: you’re on the right track. Your pet may have two or more allergies, and you’ve successfully identified one of them.
  - c. Significant improvement: Bingo!



## Dr. Chang's Recommended Elimination Diet:



Search for over-the-counter foods that contain the following ingredients:

1. Salmon and Potato. The salmon's omega-3 oils help the skin. Duck and potato, kangaroo and oats, and venison and potato are other options.
2. Pinto Beans & Yams for a home cooked temporary trial.
3. Altered Foods. These chemically isolate the offending molecules so your pet doesn't react.

Some of the OTC foods have more ingredients than what it says on the label and therefore are not as restricted as we would like for this test. Ask us for the best choices.

\*Always remember: Whenever you introduce a new food, mix the new food with your pet's existing food for the first week. Otherwise, your pet may get diarrhea.



DR. GANZER:

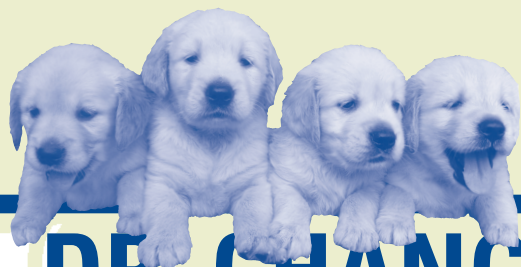
## BECOMING A VET FULFILLS HIS LIFELONG DREAM

Like many 8-year-olds, Gavin Ganzer wanted to be a veterinarian when he grew up. The difference between Gavin and most other kids is that Gavin was actually right. At that young age, he started gaining lifelong experience for his future profession and firmly set his eyes on the prize – helping animals.

"I love animals," says Gavin, a childhood resident of Kailua. "I've always had pets: Jackson Chameleons, turtles, salamanders. By the time I was 12, I was already raising Love Birds." As he grew up, Gavin studied diligently in school, knowing that acceptance into the Pre-Veterinary program at the University of Hawaii would be challenging. By the time he graduated from Lutheran High School, his discipline earned him a place in the program. He finished his undergraduate degree at UH Manoa and attended Iowa State University for his Doctorate in Veterinary Medicine.

Today, this pet-loving local boy is Dr. Ganzer, Aloha Animal Hospital Associates' newest vet.

## ALLERGY Q&A WITH THE CHIEF INSPECTOR, DR. CHANG



**Q:** Can there be two or more allergies?

**A:** Yes. Be diligent and persistent in determining the cause(s) and eliminating them. There's no shame if your pet has fleas. Hawaii's fleas are very aggressive and resistant to treatments. You may not know that your pet – or your home – have them, so be very thorough in your investigation.

**Q:** What if I can't control my pet's eating? (e.g. others feed my pet, my pet roams outside and eats in the wild, etc.)

**A:** It's okay if you can't totally remove your pet from the allergen. Just reduce it as much as possible.

**Q:** Which cat/dog breeds are most susceptible?

**A:** **Dogs** – Any breed, including mixed-breed dogs may be affected. Because of the probable genetic susceptibility, allergies may be recognized more frequently in certain breeds or families of dogs, which can vary geographically.

In the United States, commonly affected dog breeds include the Boston terrier, Cairn terrier, Dalmatian, English bulldog, English setter, Irish setter, Lhasa apso, Miniature schnauzer, Pug, Sealyham terrier, Scottish terrier, West highland white terrier, Wire fox terrier, and Golden retriever.

**Cats** – No breed appears to be more likely to develop allergic skin disease (atopic dermatitis).

**Q:** Flea bite allergies appear so similar to mange. How can I tell if my dog has mange or a flea allergy?

**A:** We can tell by doing a simple test in the laboratory to find the mites. Mite treatment is usually simple but is quite different from allergy treatment.

**Q:** My pet is an indoor pet, and only occasionally goes out. Should I still be worried about fleas?

**A:** Yes. Fleas can attach to your clothing and be introduced to your home.

Female fleas will lay 40-50 eggs per day which fall off the fur as they are laid onto any area your pet roams. They will eventually become adults in 1-6 months.

"I didn't want to stay on the mainland after graduation. I wanted to come home to Hawaii to start my career and family," said Dr. Ganzer. He and his wife recently had their first child who will no doubt become an animal lover herself. They have a cat name Pudgy.

When Dr. Ganzer returned to the islands, he began meeting with local experts in veterinary medicine to find out which vet hospitals were most respected. Those meetings led him to Aloha Animal Hospital Associates. "I went in for a visit," he said. "As I listened to Dr. Chang's philosophy about pet care, I was immediately encouraged. Then, as I observed the staff, it became obvious how much they genuinely love pets and how knowledgeable they are in their fields. I am so glad that Aloha Animal Hospital Associates is the place where I can finally begin doing what I've always wanted to do."

### THAT FIRST DAY

One of Dr. Ganzer's first patients was a cat with a chest infection.

"I took X-rays to assess whether the infection was viral or bacterial," he said. "Our lab techs gave us a quick and accurate reading and we were able

to provide the proper treatment," he said. "The cat has since recovered. I saw the improvement for myself on a recent follow-up visit, and just knowing how much better the cat – and his owner – felt, validated all the years of hard work. It was worth it."

Describing the environment of Aloha Animal Hospital as both fun and busy, Dr. Ganzer has been treating a wide spectrum of cases including dermatitis (mostly caused by fleas and food allergies), toe and eye injuries, endocrine diseases, and healthy pets having their annual check-ups. He has been enjoying the opportunity to care for many different types of pets.

"I look forward to each day," he says, noting that he benefits from the wealth of knowledge of Aloha Animal Hospital's other veterinarians. "Their expertise in veterinary medicine is amazing," he said. Watching Dr. Ganzer at work proves that some kids really do know exactly what they want to do when they grow up.

"As a kid, I cared for my own pets. Now as an adult, I still care for my own, but also my clients'. This truly is a dream job come true."



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## MEET RACHELLE: Animal Lover, Makeup Artist, Foodie

There's more than meets the eye to Aloha Animal Hospital Associate's Veterinary Technician, Rachelle. During work hours, this busy woman is all about Aloha Animal Hospital's furry, feathered, and finned patients but during her off-hours, she can be found doing makeup for friends or out at a restaurant enjoying some local grinds. The self-proclaimed "foodie" loves all kinds of dishes. "I even take pictures of my food and send it to my friends," she says.

Rachelle has no real favorite food. She likes to try it all. "I eat pretty much everything," she says. "It just depends on my mood." Food, along with pets and makeup are the things that make Rachelle the happiest. A vet tech rich with experience, Rachelle raves about the work environment at Aloha Animal Hospital Associates.

"I really like the leadership here. It's fair and open. We all get a voice and an opinion. Dr. Chang believes in the staff and our abilities. He puts his money where his mouth is." This, she says, makes her job even more rewarding. "I love doing this kind of work anyway, but it's extra special here because I know my work is appreciated and respected. We all work together for the good of the pets."

Rachelle spends most of her time taking and examining lab samples. AAHA clients may only see her for a few moments when she comes into an exam room to draw blood. Otherwise, she can be found in the lab where she analyzes blood, stool samples, and urine in order to determine what may be causing the pets to feel ill.

"We make an assessment at our lab and then double-check the results with an outside lab to

ensure the diagnosis is accurate," she said. "Dr. Chang reviews our test results and then compares them with the outside lab's. Each case is a real-life opportunity to expand our knowledge."

An owner of a big orange cat named Dandy and a Miniature Dachshund named Waffles, Rachelle is not partial to any breed of animal. "I love them all," she said, noting how much she enjoys their different personalities. "My mom has two very sassy Maltese dogs. It's funny how much attitude they can have. I see this in our clients' pets as well. Some are very calm, others are more high-strung – especially here at the hospital – but each one has a unique personality," she says with a smile. "They're like people. Each one is different."

Since this interview, Rachelle is now working as the technical assistant to Dr. Douglas Chang.

### Did you know?

Aloha Animal Hospital now uses plastic bags that are made of biodegradable plastic. Just one way to do our part in helping our environment.

### Going Green?

If you would like to start receiving our newsletter by e-mail, please write to us at [info@alohaanimal.com](mailto:info@alohaanimal.com).

Your pets are part of our family too, and it is an honor to care for them. All of us on staff give our genuine mahalo to you for placing your trust and confidence in our ability to care for your pets. It's a responsibility we take very seriously.

"For Pets Sake" is a quarterly publication of the Aloha Animal Hospital Associates. We hope you enjoyed this newsletter and we welcome your comments and suggestions.

Please submit them to:

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