



DERMATOLOGY FOR ANIMALS

1-877-604-8366  
www.dermatologyforanimals.com

## The Skinny on Skin Testing

**What is skin testing?** Skin testing, or intradermal allergy testing (IDAT), is a diagnostic procedure that involves injecting small concentrations of allergens such as pollens, molds, house dust mites, and human and cat dander directly into the skin to stimulate a reaction. The reaction is graded based on a negative (saline) and positive (histamine) control. Based on the results of the test and exposure patterns of the patient, the reactive allergens are included into a desensitization vial, also known as allergens. This product is administered by injections under the skin or given orally (sublingual immunotherapy or SLIT). If giving injections, we start out giving a small quantity of the allergens weekly, working our way up to a larger maintenance dose that is usually given every 2 weeks. Occasionally, based on the pet's needs, we may need to give the injections more frequently. SLIT is given by mouth on a daily basis with a pump system.

**What medications does my pet have to be off of for testing?** Unfortunately there are several drugs that interfere with the reactions of the allergens, giving us poorer test results and likely poorer response results. Therefore, we ask that pets be off the following medications:

Antihistamines 7-14 days

Injectable Steroids 6-8 weeks

Topical Steroids 7-14 days

Apoquel® 2 days

Oral Steroids 4 weeks

Fish oils or fish based dog food 7-14 days

Antibiotics, Antifungals, and Atopica® (cyclosporine) do not interfere with allergy testing.

**What results should I expect from desensitization therapy?** When allergen selection is based on skin testing, we achieve the same or better results as in human medicine. About 75-80% of the dogs and cats we test improve in their symptoms by 50% or more. Throughout the process of desensitization, we may find it necessary to "fine-tune" the process by changing the volume, frequency, or method of administration of the immunotherapy. Occasionally, changes in the content of the allergy vial are also helpful. Additionally, your pet may still need to be on other medications such as antihistamines, steroids, Apoquel, Cytopoint, or cyclosporine to help alleviate symptoms until we start to see improvement from the injections.

**What should I expect the day of the procedure?** You will be asked to drop your pet off in the morning. Because your pet will be sedated, we ask not to feed the morning of the appointment, but providing some water in the morning is fine. To increase the safety even more, an intravenous (IV) catheter may be placed so that we may have quick access to the circulatory system. Although your pet is sedated, your pet is awake during the procedure. A patch will be shaved on your pet's side in order for the test to be performed. Following the test, your pet is given a reversal agent to reverse the effects of the sedation. Following the procedure, you will receive a phone call to inform you that the test is complete and we will discuss a convenient pick up and discharge time (usually early afternoon). Please be aware that the discharge time may take 20-30 minutes as we like to review the results of the test with you, discuss the induction schedule, and demonstrate how to give injections or SLIT.

**What if I don't want to give injections?** Many clients elect not to give injections for various reasons. In this case you have the option of daily sublingual immunotherapy (SLIT). An alternative is having the injections given by us or your regular veterinarian and staff according to the induction schedule. Please notify us if you would like us to administer the injections.