

Antihistamine Therapy

Antihistamines

Antihistamines block H1 (Histamine) receptors. H1 receptors are responsible for itchiness and inflammation. H1 blockers act by competing with histamine for the H1 receptors. They do not block the release of histamine but can hinder its effects.

- First-generation antihistamines (eg/ Chlor-Tripolon, Benadryl) can have sedative effects and may cause gastro-intestinal upset, such as vomiting or diarrhea. The sedative effective does decrease over time.
- Second generation antihistamines (eg/ Reactine) are less likely to cross the 'bloodbrain barrier', therefore tend to have minimal sedative effects (non-drowsy).

Responses to antihistamines vary considerably and several trials may be necessary to find the right one for your pet. Try one for at least 7-10 days and if there are no changes in clinical signs, then switch and try the next one.

Antihistamines may enhance the effects of NSAIDs (eg/ Metacam), steroids (eg/ prednisone) or fatty acid supplements and may allow dosages to be reduced in some cases.

Fatty Acids

Fatty acids are an essential component of cells. The most important fatty acids for the skin in dogs and cats are linoleic acid and linolenic acid. They have a direct anti-inflammatory effect.

Essential fatty acid supplementation is indicated for many skin diseases, including allergies. Lack of response to one product does not mean there won't be a response to another. They can improve the response to steroids and antihistamines in some cases. Approximately 20% of dogs and 50% of cats with allergic pruritus (itchiness) will show improvement when fatty acids are used in conjunction with antihistamines.

Dosage Chart

Generic Name	Trade Name	Strength	Dosage Based on Body Weight					Frequency
			1-5kg	5-10kg	10-15kg	15-25kg	>25kg	
Dog								
Diphenhydramine	Benadryl	25mg	½ tablet	1 tablet	1 tablet	2 tablets	2 tablets	2 - 3 x/day
Chlorpheniramine	Chlor-Tripolon	4mg	½ tablet	1 tablet	2 tablets	2.5 tablets	3 tablets	2 - 3 x/day
Cetirizine	Reactine	10mg	¼ tablet	½ tablet	½ tablet	1 tablet	1 tablet	1 - 2 x/day
Cat								
Chlorpheniramine	Chlor-Tripolon	4mg	½ tablet	1 tablet				2 x/day
Cetirizine	Reactine	10mg	¼ tablet	½ tablet				1 - 2 x/day