**Steps To Control Allergic Dermatitis In Dogs**

Step 1: Antihistamine Trial (Benadryl/Claritin/Zyrtec)

* Allergic reactions cause a release of histamine in the body which results in itchy skin. Antihistamines blocks the effects, and in turn, reduces itchiness from allergies.
* Side effects are not very common in dogs, but some animals can vomit, drool or become drowsy on these medications.
* Ask for dosage sheet for over-the-counter antihistamines

Step 2: Apoquel Trial with Initial Cortisone Injection

* During Allergic Dermatitis, immunologic bodies are released to help the body control the foreign invader. Apoquel inhibits the immunologic body that is responsible for inflammation and the extreme itchiness of allergies.
* The initial injection of cortisone works faster that Apoquel, so it is used in order to stop the itching quicker before secondary infections take place. Apoquel is started 5 days after the cortisone injection.
* Cortisone Side Effects: increased in drinking, increase in hunger, increase in thirst
* Apoquel rarely has side effects, however, the most common side effects are vomiting, diarrhea and lethargy which are transient and resolve spontaneously.
* *Long term Apoquel/Cortisone usage is not recommended*
* *Cortisone injections are a one time occurrence, while the Apoquel is given every 24-72 hours based on the lowest effective dose per dog.*

Step 3: Cytopoint Trial

* Cytopoint is an injection that is usually given monthly and contains antibodies that neutralizes the immulogic bodies that the immune system of the dog produces in response to allergic dermatitis. Cytopoint also disrupts the signals that are activated in dogs when exposed to allergens to help control future reactions.
* Side effects of Cytopoint are rare but most commonly are GI upset, lethargy, pain at injection site and anorexia.
* *Cytopoint is* ***AN ONCE MONTHY*** *injection until otherwise discontinued/changed by a Veterinarian.*

Step 4: Heska Testing & Allergy Specific Injections

* Heska offers individual testing on a universal panel of 83 allergens. Once testing is complete, dog specific injections are produced by the company and then administered at the hospital.
* The injections are time sensitive and the average positive response time is within 3-6 months.
* Side effects of the injection are uncommon but a small amount of redness and itchiness may be seen at the site of the injection.

Step 5: Referral to Dermatology at Cornell University

* At this point we have exhausted the options available in hospital and a specialist is required.