



# Pointers For Pets

## Starting From Scratch With An Allergic Dog

(NAPSA)—If you think humans are the only ones who get allergies, you're barking up the wrong tree. More than 25 percent of dogs in the United States are estimated to suffer from some form of allergies. Pets have problems with the same allergens as humans, and in a strange role reversal, can even be allergic to their owners.

But the most common allergic condition is atopic dermatitis. Seven million U.S. dogs suffer from the condition—a severe, itchy skin disease that results in hypersensitivity to environmental allergens such as pollen, mold and dust mites.

Your veterinarian can tell if your dog has atopic dermatitis, but there are also things for you to consider. Dr. Tiffany Tapp, veterinary dermatologist at Ocean State Veterinary Specialists in East Greenwich, R.I., offers four tips:

**1. Know the signs.** Atopic dogs groom excessively, licking or chewing their paws, abdomen and hindquarters. Their ears may be red and hot to the touch. Watch for stains from licking or hair loss in the armpits, groin or between the toes of the paws.

**2. See your veterinarian.** While atopic dermatitis is one of the most common canine allergies, dogs can also have allergies to food, vaccines, insect bites or drugs. Your veterinarian can help you determine why your pooch is suffering and suggest ways to alleviate the discomfort.

**3. Consider treatment options.** If your dog is diagnosed



### **More than a quarter of all dogs in the United States have allergies.**

with atopic dermatitis, your veterinarian may prescribe Atopica<sup>®</sup> (Cyclosporine capsules, USP) Modified. It's the only option approved by the Food and Drug Administration for long-term management of canine atopic dermatitis and blocks the allergic response that causes itching without the serious side effects of steroids. Veterinarians also use immunotherapy, or allergy shots, to decrease a pet's sensitivity to a specific allergen.

**4. Control the allergens.** Do what you can to reduce the allergens in your dog's world. Use allergen-resistant bedding; keep the humidity low inside your home to minimize dust mites and mold; keep your dog away from unmowed grass, high grass and weeds; and, during peak allergy season, limit outdoor activity in the early morning, when pollen levels are at their highest.

For more information, visit [www.us.atopica.com](http://www.us.atopica.com).

*Note to Editor:* As with all drugs, side effects may occur. In a field study, the most common side effects were gastrointestinal signs. Gingival hyperplasia and papillomas also may occur during the initial dosing phase. Atopica is not for use in reproducing dogs or dogs with a history of malignant neoplasia. Pet owners should refer to the full product insert at [www.us.atopica.com](http://www.us.atopica.com) for more information.