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Combat allergies with fish and omega 3's EFA oils based diets.

Some still believe that skin allergies are only attributable to an allergic reaction to the proteins contained in the food.

Today it is accepted that dogs with actual protein allergy are in a minority (3-5 %).

Furthermore, it is clinically impossible to distinguish allergy (immune system) from intolerance.

Some of the most common signs which may be noted in sensitive dogs are:

red and watery eyes

dull dry and rough coat

dandruff

patchy loss of hair

foul skin odour

constant scratching

dry, moist dorsal and ventral skin inflammation

paw licking

chronic or recurrent inflammation of the ear/s
excessive desire to eat grass
blocked anal glands (resulting in scooting)
halitosis (bad breath) which could persist after teeth cleaning
severe summer itch.

In the world the demand for animal meat and by-products is very high and to match it farm domesticated animals and birds are raised in a very intensive way and the meat industry uses a long list of chemical/pharmaceutical products which range from vaccines, to growth modulators and antibiotics.

Understandable these substances or their metabolites do remain in the animal meat and by-products as chemical/pharmaceutical residues which usually are the cause dietary sensitivity.

Dogs don't actually develop allergies as a results of exposure to allergens, but because they have suddenly become susceptible or vulnerable in some way.

Furthermore, a wrong food item may and usually do deplete the dogs immune system over a period of time because it may be and usually are polluted with toxins (i.e. pharmacological residues in meat, meat by-products, fat, antibiotics and preservatives – and more).

Then by just changing the dog diet to a free ranges land animal meat organs and fat, many of these common but recurrent and difficult to control cases may get better.

Such free range raw diets then is also superior to factory farmed meats, any commercial processed feeds and as such still species appropriate and perfect as formula just as what Mother Nature intended for carnivores – natural organic and a complete package for dogs puppies and pregnant females – for dogs in all stages of life.

This said it is important to remember that fish is the most valuable source of long chain polyunsaturated Omega-3 fatty acids (EPA & DHA) and mostly a shortage in whatever you feed ... even in feeding raw.

The use of fish in an elimination diet for unresolved skin problems.

After all possible causes taken into consideration - itchy skin problems and continuous inflammation of the ear/s - it was found a simple diet change containing Omega 3's - a combination of plain minced sardines or pilchards without tomato (found in every supermarket) and some boiled rice or sweet potato given for a period of at least 10 days – resulted that the itch disappeared and then when the old food was re-introduced the condition re-surfaced.

This elimination diet is not a complete diet though as it lack essential nutrients, but is a simple and easy to prepare as elimination diet.

At this stage though you could still not be sure if the cause of the itchy skin was an allergy to something in the usual food you offer as diet or then a specific animal protein or if there was more to it.

It could be anything in the commercial dog food or homemade diet or the raw diet containing organic or non-intensive farming chicken, beef or pork, as animal protein and fat sources.

We also noted that sedentary more than active dogs fed homemade diets presented more acute symptoms which were related to the amount of meaty meals eaten (skin, bones, animal fat, broth etc.) Every dog diet that containing a standard level of animal by-products and fats could cause, in sensitive dogs, an ongoing or recurrent problem.

Furthermore, dogs that ate table scraps on top of what you usually feed with a basic chronic condition with peaks of reactions shortly after the consumption of such table scraps.

It is important to remember that every sensitive dog has a specific organ or system which may be more affected (skin, gastrointestinal system, eyes, ears, anal glands or more than one simultaneously).

It has been hypothesized that sensitization may be a concomitant effect of different sensitizing factors.

Therefore the elimination of only one of these factors (in this case a diet without intensive farming meat and fats) could increase the sensitization threshold hence making the symptoms disappear.

This could explain why different types of intervention may lead to the same result.

In fact we believe that the metabolites/residues contained in intensive farming meat, meat by-product and fats could be the major contributors to the lowering of the sensitivity threshold.

By using a diet free of land animal meat/by products and fat it may also be possible to reduce the summer hypersensitivity due to the elevated presence of environmental allergens.

It has been demonstrated that omega-3 from fish are more effectively incorporated into plasma lipids than when administered as supplement, therefore a fish based diet may be more effective than only adding omega-3 to the diet.

This could be attributable to differences in physiochemical structure between lipids in fish and in fish oil.

1)Visioli F., Barassi M.C., Marangoni F. and Galli C. Dietary intake of fish vs. formulations leads to higher plasma concentration on omega-3 fatty acids. *Lipids* 2003; 38: 415-8.

2)Torkildsen O., Brunborg L.A., Milde A.M., Mork S.J., Myhr K-M. and Bo L. A salmon based diet protects mice from behavioural changes in the cuprizone model for demyelination. *Clinical Nutrition* 2009; 28: 83-87.

3) Elvevoll E.O., Barstad H., Breimo E.S., Brox J., Eilertsen K.E., Lund T., Olsen J.O. and Osterud B. Enhanced incorporation on omega-3 fatty acids from fish compared with fish oils. *Lipids* 2006; 41: 1109-14.