

BRICK TOWN VETERINARY HOSPITAL, P.A.  
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### ANTI-HISTAMINES FOR TREATMENT OF ALLERGIC DERMATITIS

Over the years, dogs and cats with allergic dermatitis (itchy, scaly skin) have been treated with cortisone-related drugs. Cortisones, although excellent at controlling itching, have many undesirable side effects: increased water intake and urination, increased appetite, weight gain. More serious metabolic side effects may be seen in pets receiving cortisones for extended periods of time (months), especially those receiving high doses.

In an effort to reduce or totally avoid these cortisone-related side effects, we prefer to try treating our patients with antihistamines. Antihistamines are generally much safer (have fewer and less severe side effects) than cortisones and are especially desirable for pets requiring long-term treatment of their dermatitis.

Individual animals respond differently to antihistamines. Because of this, it may be necessary to try several different antihistamines before we determine which is most effective for your pet. We give each antihistamine a 10-14 day trial before determining its ability to control your pet's itching.

#### OVER-THE-COUNTER ANTI-HISTAMINES TO TRY

Use these medications with caution in patients with glaucoma, hyperthyroidism, cardiovascular disease, hypertension. Do not use in patients who are hypersensitive to these medications.

1. Chlorpheniramine maleate. (Chlor-Trimeton) 4mg tablets, Oral syrup 2mg/ml.  
Dogs: 2 to 4 mg orally twice to three times a day (1/2 to 1 tablet)  
Cats: 1 to 2 mg orally twice to three times a day (1/4 to 1/2 tab)
2. Diphenhydramine HCl. (Benadryl) 25 and 50 mg capsules, 50 mg tablets, Oral syrup 12.5mg/ml  
Dogs: 25 to 50 mg orally twice to three times a day.
3. Clemastine. (Tavist 1) 1.34mg Clemastine fumarate tablets  
(Do not use Tavist D - this contains a decongestant)  
Dogs: 0.05-0.1mg per kg orally twice daily (1/2 to 1 tablet for a 22 pound dog)

Animals that do not respond to these antihistamines may be placed on prescription antihistamines for similar 10 to 14 day trial periods. Please contact our office for the necessary prescriptions.

Some pets with allergic dermatitis may also benefit from taking Derm Caps, an oral fatty acid supplement.