

**October  
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# Rhodes Vet Clinic

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**Newsletter**

## Allergies

Rhodes Veterinary Clinic  
74 Gellibrand Street  
COLAC 3250  
P: 03 5232 2111  
F: 03 5231 5892  
E: info@rhodesvet.com.au

### Veterinarians:

Dr Michael Rhodes  
Dr Alyce Ryan

### Practice Manager:

Cindy Schoell

### Nurses:

Kirsty Paton  
Kaylene Swayn

### Admin:

Kylie Mahoney

Spring means the beginning of "hay fever" season, it is not just humans that suffer from allergies during this time, some pets are affected as well during this time. While people become congested during this time, our pets are madly scratching due to pruritis (itchiness). The itchiness is caused by an immune and inflammatory response from the allergen.

Some of the most common causes of allergic dermatitis are:

- flea bites, insect bites & dust mites – localised allergic reaction
- pollen, grass, plants & mould spores
- detergents, shampoos, and household cleaning products
- food - most common are grains and cereals, meat proteins (beef, fish and chicken) & starchy vegetables & soy



Common signs your pet may be itchy include scratching and biting, inflamed and infected skin - i.e. hot spots, excessive shedding, compulsive paw licking, scooting or licking anal region, chronic ear infections and respiratory issues

The frequent itching can develop into hot spots, or raw and inflamed skin areas, which can become infected and require medication. Medications can include:

- Antibiotics - for any secondary bacterial infections
- Medicated shampoos & conditioners
- Medicated ointment
- Steroids – short course to disrupt the immune and inflammatory response, however, does come with side effects (increased drinking, urinating and eating)
- Over the counter antihistamines – helpful in ~10-20% cases
- Apoquel – effective as steroids without the side effects, can take up 3 days to become effective, works by inhibiting the itch signals to the cell
- Cytopoint – antibody treatment that targets and neutralises the itch response with minimal impact on the normal immune functions. It involves a monthly (4 week) injection, with majority of dogs having visible improvement within 8hrs of the first injection.

If your pet displays any of these signs or you are concerned that they may be experiencing allergic dermatitis please book an appointment.

### We provide:

- Surgery & Medicine for small and large animals
- Herd Health Advice
- Cattle Pregnancy Testing
- Bull Fertility Testing
- Lameness in Cattle
- Equine Consults
- Soft Tissue & Orthopaedic Surgery
- Dentistry
- Digital X-ray
- Ultrasound
- In House Blood Testing
- Nutrition

**Simpson Office:**  
Please call 5232 2111

[www.rhodesveterinaryclinic.com.au](http://www.rhodesveterinaryclinic.com.au)

**Colac Office:**  
Monday to Friday  
8am to 6pm  
Saturday 9am to 12 noon

**We are available 24/7  
for emergencies.  
Our emergency number  
is:  
5232 2111**

## Nutrition is Important to our pets

A complete and balanced diet is essential for maintaining your pet in good health. It is made up of the following components:

- Water – free access to clean water
- Protein – for energy and muscle function & growth
- Carbohydrates – for energy and fibre
- Fats – for energy, healthy and shiny skin, and coat
- Vitamins & Minerals – immune, muscle and nerve support

The saying “You are what you eat” applies to our pets in the same way it does for us. An imbalanced diet can result in the following conditions:

- Obesity
- Gastrointestinal problems – pancreatitis & diarrhoea
- Heart problems
- Urinary problems – bladder stones & feline lower urinary tract disease
- Skin problems – hair loss & itchiness



The cost of the higher quality food over the life of the pet will be offset by lower veterinary bills and the reduced risk of health issues associated with imbalanced diet. The best of high quality or premium pet food contain human grade ingredients which are more palatable, such as meat and/or meat meal. There should be no “by-products”, “fillers”, “chemical preservatives”, “artificial colours or flavours”. Some less expensive/lower quality brands will add sugar or artificial flavouring to make their food more palatable.

Dogs and Cats love treats. They can be used to encourage good behaviour. They should be less than 10% of their daily intake. Premade treats or fresh vegetables/fruits (green beans, banana slices, baby carrots, watermelon or apples) can be used. Feeding your pet table scraps is the quickest way to weight problems and picky eaters with no nutritional benefit.

Commercial foods are designed to meet all of your pet’s dietary requirements. If you prefer a raw food diet for your pet that is fine too as long it provides the right combination of energy, protein, healthy fats and essential nutrients for your pet’s stage of life. Highly recommended to be avoided in growing puppies with raw food being used as treats only.

It is recommended that you provide your pets the best quality food that you can afford.

