

Setting the standard for allergy care.

The ACTT® Allergy Program

The ACTT Allergy Program specializes in allergy testing and treatment for dogs, cats and horses. Our services are offered only through a licensed veterinarian. We provide complete allergy management addressing all aspects of a patient's allergy needs:

- Serum IgE Allergy Testing
- Custom Immunotherapy Treatment
- Professional Consultation
- Ongoing Patient Management
- Exceptional Customer Service
- Educational Materials



Improved
Performance

Allergic disease can severely impair the performance of competition horses and cause great discomfort and disability in leisure horses and ponies.

About Equine Allergies

Allergies are a primary cause of both respiratory and skin ailments in horses. The most challenging part of any allergy case is identifying the specific allergens that are causing a horse to suffer. Equine allergies can manifest in a broad array of symptoms, from hives and itching of the skin, to respiratory distress and poor performance. Allergens can enter the body through the skin (contact), the respiratory tract (inhaled) and the gastrointestinal tract (ingested).

Common equine allergic triggers



Insect Bites
(including *Culicoides*)



Food allergies



Dust Mites



Weed, grass and tree
pollens (often found in
bedding shavings)



Molds
(commonly found in
damp hay or straw)

FAQ's

Do I need to go through a veterinarian to have my horse allergy tested?

Yes. Our services are offered only through a licensed veterinarian. Prior to testing, your doctor will conduct a differential diagnosis to determine if your horse's symptoms are caused by allergies. If so, your veterinarian will then draw a small amount of blood from your horse and send the serum to ALK for allergy testing. Our test results will identify the specific allergens that are causing your horse to suffer. Long-term treatment recommendations will be made based on the allergy test results.

How long will my horse need treatment?

Every allergic animal's response to immunotherapy is unique, and all show progress at different rates. Some animals exhibit immediate, dramatic improvement in allergy symptoms once desensitization begins. Others may require 6-8 months before significant improvement occurs. Immunotherapy is recommended for a minimum of 3-5 years, however the need for allergy treatment may continue throughout your horse's life. Immunotherapy is the only treatment for allergies that actually halts the disease progression.

What will happen if I don't treat my horse's allergies?

Left untreated, your horse's symptoms will continue to get worse as it ages. Allergies worsen over time as IgE antibody levels rise in the blood in response to your horse's continued allergen exposure. Steroids may offer temporary relief, but long-term use of these drugs has undesirable side effects and is not recommended. The only long-term solution for allergy symptoms that is safe and effective is allergen-specific immunotherapy.

Equine Allergies

Your simple guide to a lifetime of relief.



Call 800-444-2370 or visit ACTTAllergy.com to learn more.

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ACTT®
Countless Pet Allergies. One Solution.

Dermatologic Symptoms

Allergic dermatitis is one of many inflammatory skin disorders affecting horses, resulting in typical symptoms of dermatitis: pruritus, urticaria, erythema and crusting or flaky lesions. Allergy in horses most commonly appears as a skin rash known as urticaria (hives).

Urticaria (Hives) can occur on any part of the epidermis and can be highly pruritic, lasting from a few hours to several days or weeks. Horses with hives frequently exhibit allergic reactions to inhaled pollens, as well as to the bites of insects, including flies (horse, stable, caddis, house and deerfly), mosquito, and the biting midge known as *Culicoides*. Self-trauma induced lesions and secondary infections may follow. Other symptoms can include subcutaneous edema, especially around the head and eyes.

Sweet Itch Also known as "summer eczema," this is an allergic reaction to the saliva of the biting midge (*Culicoides*). It is characterized by papules that frequently result in scabs, localized at the base of the tail, dorsum, and base of the mane and ears. The intense itching caused by these lesions, and the subsequent rubbing to obtain relief, results in hair loss and thickened/scaly skin.

Respiratory Symptoms

Recurrent Airway Obstruction (RAO)

A more complex form of allergy in the horse is an inflammatory lung condition known as Recurrent Airway Obstruction (RAO), formerly called Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD). Horses with RAO develop pulmonary hypersensitivity to inhaled allergens, resulting in increased mucus production and the subsequent narrowing of the airways. Molds and fungal spores found in barn dust and hay feed are the main offenders.

Also known as "heaves," RAO causes breathing to become labored. The horse must expend a considerable amount of effort to expel air from the lungs, hence the term "heaves." In temperate areas of the world where horses spend most of their time in warm pastures, a variant of RAO known as "summer pasture heaves" occurs in susceptible animals. Grass or hay pollens and molds associated with damp pasture forage are the causative allergens in this disease.

Contact Dermatitis presents as hair loss and irritation of the skin caused by saddles, blankets, shampoos, etc.

Gastrointestinal Allergic Symptoms can be brought on by food allergy and cause adverse reactions including gastroenteritis and inflammatory bowel disease.

Step 1:

ACTT Equine Allergy Test

To begin, your veterinarian will draw a small amount of blood from your horse and send the serum to us for allergy testing (also known as "serum IgE" testing). The ACTT Allergy Test detects elevated levels of IgE antibodies in the blood for those specific allergens that are causing your horse's allergic symptoms.

Our comprehensive equine panel is region-specific, and tests for up to 90 individual allergens. The panel includes weed, tree and grass pollens; molds, mites, insects, *Culicoides*, and feed ingredients. Our test offers many advantages for the horse and owner alike:

1. No steroid or antihistamine withdrawal necessary.
2. A simple blood test – no shaving or skin testing required.
3. Not traumatic or invasive for the patient.
4. Any veterinarian can submit a sample for testing.



After testing, we can formulate an immunotherapy treatment kit for your horse.

Step 2:

Immunotherapy Treatment

In consultation with your veterinarian, we can formulate immunotherapy treatment (desensitization) which specifically targets your horse's allergies. A thorough clinical history will also be considered when preparing treatment.

Immunotherapy is a safe and effective, long-term treatment that gradually builds your horse's immunity to the specific allergens that are causing discomfort. Increasing amounts of allergen are given to the animal, beginning with a low dose and increasing in concentration. When administered according to the prescribed schedule, this treatment works to neutralize the allergic reactions which cause the horse's symptoms. A successful desensitization program can reduce the need to treat your horse with steroids, which is extremely beneficial for performance horses. Immunotherapy from the ACTT® Allergy Program is available in both shots and drops, and will not interfere with standard drug testing prior to competition.

Immunotherapy Success Rates

Our veterinary clients report that up to 80% of animals on immunotherapy respond favorably to desensitization treatment. Success depends on adherence to the prescribed course of treatment and requires a commitment from the horse owner.



There is no cure for allergies, but they can be managed. With careful attention and dedication, immunotherapy is a highly effective treatment for allergies.

