

DERMATOLOGICAL:

A TEAM APPROACH TO ITCHY DOGS

Every member of the practice is a part of the team that makes a difference in **providing relief for itchy dogs**, **delivering peace of mind for pet owners** and **maximizing business opportunities** over the long term.

This guide offers a step-by-step approach to an integrated team approach across the continuum of care for itchy dogs.

DERMATOLOGICAL: A TEAM APPROACH TO THE ITCHY DOG

Every member of the veterinary practice team plays an integral role in partnering with the pet owner to provide relief for their itchy dog throughout the continuum of care.



PET OWNER

Itch can take an emotional toll on pet owners and erode cherished bonds. Owners of itchy dogs want to see the veterinarian for real relief, immediately—rather than recommendations for treatments they could have tried at home.



RECEPTIONIST

- Offer help and comfort for the pet owner of any itchy dog from the initial point of contact
- Ensure pet owners receive excellent customer service starting with the initial appointment booking



PRACTICE MANAGER

- Set and design strategies for achieving financial goals, understanding the integral role itchy dogs play in practice profitability
- Help the practice staff understand the benefit of functioning as a cohesive unit



TECHNICIAN

- Work with the receptionist to provide a friendly and seamless transition for the pet owner and itchy dog throughout every visit
- Support the veterinarian in prepping for the exam and performing diagnostics to help inform treatment recommendation



VETERINARIAN

- Protect the health of itchy dogs—establish itch inquiry as a key component of every exam
- Promote the value of teamwork and help to ensure the practice functions efficiently and successfully

Share best practices for the itchy dog with your colleagues by using the hashtag, **#TeamUpAgainstItch**

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DERMATOLOGICAL APPROACH ACROSS THE CONTINUUM OF CARE

Dermatology is one of the fastest growing therapeutic categories in veterinary medicine. A commitment to an integrated team approach is critical to guiding the itchy dog through the practice, expediting relief, and providing great client service.



Client Call



Did you know **skin allergies are the #1 reason** for canine veterinary visits?¹

Patient Intake



Itchy dog visits have increased nearly 50% since 2013²

Diagnostics & Treatment



7.5 million dogs were diagnosed with pruritus over the past year²

Checkout



Treatment can be successful only if the pet owner is actively engaged in care

Long-term Care



Partnership and two-way collaboration are key to treatment outcomes and customer loyalty

TEAM-CENTRIC APPROACH



PRACTICE MANAGER

Foster a collaborative environment that promotes teamwork in the care of itchy dogs to best achieve the clinical and financial goals of the practice.



DERMATOLOGY AS A PROFIT CENTER

Learn how to maximize the potential of your dermatology profit center.





Client Call



Patient Intake

Diagnostics & Treatment

Checkout

Long-term Care

CLIENT CONCERN FOR THEIR ITCHY DOG ALWAYS CALLS FOR AN EXAM BY THE VETERINARIAN

The relationship between a veterinary practice and a client with an itchy dog often starts with a phone call.

- **7 out of 10 pet owners** who called a practice office looking for relief for their itchy dog **received a recommendation for an over-the-counter treatment** (such as antihistamines) rather than being scheduled for an appointment³
 - **Antihistamines offer little or no benefit** to treating flares of canine atopic dermatitis⁴
- **88% of owners have tried at-home itch treatments** (up to 15) before bringing their dog to the clinic⁵
- **Ineffective itch treatment can lead to frustration** and pose a threat to clients' trust in their veterinarian

TEAM-CENTRIC APPROACH



RECEPTIONIST

Schedule an appointment for an exam.



VETERINARIAN + TECHNICIAN

Support the receptionist by stressing the importance of exams for itchy dogs and the need for pet owners to schedule an appointment to identify the underlying cause of itch.



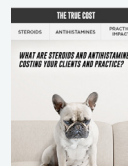
PREPARE FOR THE CLIENT CALL

Explore how phone fixes can adversely alter the itchy dog's journey.



ANSWERING THE CALL FOR ITCHY DOGS

Print this for front desk staff to reference during client calls.



KNOWTHETRUECOST.COM

What are antihistamines costing your clients and practice?

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ANSWERING THE CALL FOR ITCHY DOGS— THEY’RE COUNTING ON US

Every phone call presents an opportunity to demonstrate great client service. In order to provide itchy dogs with the relief they need and help protect the bonds that matter most, an exam is necessary.

Recognize and validate pet owner’s concern about their itchy dog:

“Mrs Smith, I know we both want relief for Max as soon as possible.”

Ask all pet owners with itchy dogs to schedule an appointment:

“Let’s get Max scheduled for Dr. Green’s first available appointment so we can find out why he is so itchy.”

If the client objects to coming in for an appointment:

“There are several causes of itch and the exam will help us to find the reason behind the itch and provide proper treatment for Max.”

If the client asks for a solution over the phone:

“I wish I could provide helpful advice to you over the phone; however, an exam is necessary. Over-the-counter products are rarely effective for itch or they may represent just one part of a potential treatment plan. Without seeing Max, we cannot make a proper determination of the best approach to his care and we run the risk of delaying relief. We really want to get to the root cause of Max’s itch as soon as possible.”

PRACTICE TALKING POINTS

[When booking appointments, consider communicating the duration of exams with pet owners to help set expectations.]



Client Call

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PATIENT INTAKE *FORMS* A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF ITCH

Every member of the veterinary practice team should engage the pet owner in collecting patient history to better inform the exam to help ensure an accurate diagnosis by the veterinarian.

- **Patient relief and pet owner peace of mind relies on an accurate recording of patient history** in conjunction with clinical presentation
- **There are many possible causes of itch** and distinguishing the underlying cause **requires an exam by a veterinarian**

TEAM-CENTRIC APPROACH



RECEPTIONIST

Reassure the pet owner that they have done the right thing by coming in for an exam and have them complete the intake form.



TECHNICIAN

Review intake form with pet owner and gather more detailed history including signs of allergic itch beyond scratching.



VETERINARIAN

Engage the pet owner in a deeper discussion of history, and reassure them that the team is working to provide their pet relief.



LIFESTYLE PATIENT INTAKE FORM

Leverage a comprehensive patient intake form that incorporates itch inquiry into every exam.



APPROACH TO THE ITCHY DOG EXAM ROOM POSTER

Educate your clients on the diagnostic work-up with a road map to relief.



SIGNS OF AN ITCHY DOG

Ask the pet owner to complete while waiting for the exam.

HAVE AN ITCHY DOG?

Frequent scratching is one sign of allergic itch, but there are other telltale signs as well:



Frequent licking, chewing, biting or scratching



Excessive rolling, rubbing or scooting



Recurrent ear problems (head shaking, ear discharge/odor, or scratching at ears)



Hair loss



Body odor



Skin changes (rash, redness, greasy skin, or scabs)

The more we know about itch, the better informed we'll be to treat it. Sharing your dog's itch history is critical in uncovering the underlying cause of itch and the proper course of action.

- Where is your dog itchy?
- How itchy is your dog on a scale of 0-100 (0 indicating a normal dog and 100 indicating extremely severe itching)?
- How long and how often has your dog been itchy? Are there certain times of the year your dog is itchy? (duration, seasonality, etc)
- What have you already tried to relieve the itch?
- What are you using for flea control?

ITCH OBSERVATIONS (TO SHARE WITH VETERINARIAN)



Client Call

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A STREAMLINED DIAGNOSTIC APPROACH AND TAILORED TREATMENT PLAN FOR ITCH

There are many reasons why a dog may itch. The veterinary practice team can diagnose and manage common causes of itch to protect the bonds that matter most.

- **Achieve a diagnosis through a streamlined approach and deliver individualized care** tailored for each itchy dog
- **The right itch treatment will provide rapid relief and comfort without interference**, allowing the veterinarian to complete the diagnostic work-up

TEAM-CENTRIC APPROACH



VETERINARIAN

Conduct a thorough physical exam to identify the cause of itch, validate reported areas of itch and provide relief. Decide on a treatment plan with the pet owner.



TECHNICIAN

Educate pet owners on the value of the diagnostic work-up and what to expect. Assist the veterinarian in diagnostics and provide the pet owner with positive reinforcement of work-up findings.



NAVTA CE: DERMATOLOGY DIAGNOSTICS FOR TECHNICIANS

Learn the practical skills and techniques needed to perform diagnostic work-up.



WORK-UP GUIDE & ITCH TRACKER

Use this guide for your next itchy dog work-up, complete with itch tracker.



COMMUNICATING WITH CLIENTS VIDEO SERIES

See how to be proactive in addressing itch during every exam.

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DIAGNOSIS BEGINS WITH RELIEF

When getting to the underlying cause of a dog's itch, it's important to provide relief while completing the diagnostic work-up that leads to a tailored treatment plan for each pet and each owner.



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CHECKOUT IS A BRIDGE TO THE NEXT CHECK-IN

Proactive booking of follow-up appointments and medical progress exams will help to increase client compliance and build trust and loyalty.

- **Schedule the next appointment** before the client leaves the office
- **Share the practice's commitment to continued care** and long-term relief for the itchy dog
- **Reinforce that the anti-itch therapy was chosen specifically for their dog** to provide fast relief
- **Provide the client with educational materials** to help them partner in providing the best care for their pet

TEAM-CENTRIC APPROACH



RECEPTIONIST

Partner with the technician to review the treatment plan with the client and ensure follow-up with the pet owner at checkout to leave a lasting impression.



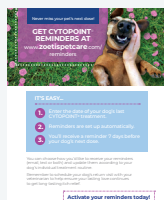
TECHNICIAN

Review the treatment plan with the pet owner, ensure all questions have been addressed and reinforce the commitment to helping the owner and pet.



VETERINARIAN

Emphasize continued care, starting with anchor treatment and the importance of two-way communication.



APPOINTMENT REMINDERS

Encourage pet owners to sign up for CYTOPOINT treatment reminders through Zoetis Petcare.



FLARE HANDOUT

Educate pet owners on the signs of a flare and how to ensure successful long-term management of itch.

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PREPARE FOR A FLARE OF ITCH

Allergic dermatitis requires lifelong management—even when controlled, occasional flares can occur, especially for seasonally affected dogs. Fleas and infections may exacerbate flares of allergic itch.



If you suspect a flare, contact the practice to schedule an exam for your dog to be seen.



Partner with your veterinarian to understand the cause of the flare.



Do not stop anti-itch treatment for your dog during the flare.



Additional treatment may be needed to provide relief after a flare of allergic itch.

HOW TO RATE YOUR DOG'S ITCH

100

EXTREMELY SEVERE ITCHING

Dog is scratching, chewing, licking almost continuously. Itching practically never stops, regardless of what else is happening around your dog.

80

SEVERE ITCHING

Prolonged episodes of itching when your dog is awake. Itching occurs at night and also when eating, playing or exercising or when otherwise distracted.

60

MODERATE ITCHING

Regular episodes of itching when your dog is awake. Itching may occur at night and wake the dog. No itching when eating, playing, exercising or being distracted.

40

MILD ITCHING

Moderately frequent episodes of itching. There may be occasional episodes of itching at night. No itching when sleeping, eating, playing, exercising or being distracted.

20

VERY MILD ITCHING

Occasional episodes of itching. Your dog is slightly more itchy than before the problem began.

0

NORMAL DOG

Itching is not a problem.

Successful long-term management of allergic dogs also includes year-round flea prevention and careful monitoring of any skin infections.

OBSERVATIONS OF ITCH





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PARTNER WITH CLIENTS FOR A LONG-TERM MANAGEMENT PLAN

Setting expectations to maintain long-term control of itch and preparing for possible pruritic flares can protect client trust in the veterinary practice

- **Allergic dermatitis requires lifelong management**—even when controlled, occasional flares can occur especially for seasonally affected dogs⁶
- **Prepare clients for the possibility of flares by establishing an individualized plan** and encourage them not to stop treatment without consulting with their veterinarian

TEAM-CENTRIC APPROACH



VETERINARIAN

Set expectations for pet owners with allergic dogs and encourage vigilance in looking for signs of itch.



TECHNICIAN

Teach pet owners how to rate and track their dog's itch throughout the year to identify any seasonality.



RECEPTIONIST

Be proactive about checking in with pet owners of allergic dogs and encouraging them to reach out with any concerns.



SKIN HEALTH POSTER FOR SUPPORT STAFF

Help kennel assistants and groomers identify the signs of skin disease if itchy dogs are in their care.



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Together, we continue to change the way we approach dermatology

[#TeamUpAgainstItch](#)

References: **1.** Now from Nationwide®. Most Common Medical Conditions that Prompt Veterinary Visits. <https://blog.nationwide.com/news/reasons-to-take-pets-to-the-vet/>. Accessed December 18, 2018. **2.** Data on file, VetStreet/Covetrus Pruritus Projection Trend Report, 2019, Zoetis Inc. **3.** Data on file, Dermatology Mystery Calls Multiphased Research, 2018, Zoetis Inc. **4.** Olivry T, DeBoer DJ, Favrot C, et al. Treatment of canine atopic dermatitis: 2015 updated guidelines from the International Committee on Allergic Diseases of Animals (ICADA). *BMC Vet Res.* 2015;11:210. doi:10.1186/s12917-015-0514-6. **5.** Data on file, Pet Owner Quantitative Market Research, 2013, Zoetis Inc. **6.** Bizikova P, Santoro D, Marsella R, et al. Review: clinical and histological manifestations of canine atopic dermatitis. *Vet Dermatol.* 2015;26(2):79-e24. doi:10.1111/vde.12196.

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