



GRAND AVENUE
VETERINARY CLINIC

APOQUEL™ VS. STEROIDS VS. ANTIHISTAMINES FOR ALLERGIES

Key Points on Apoquel™

- Unlike steroids, Apoquel™ side effects are minimal: no excessive thirst or hunger, no excessive urination, and no long-term negative effects on the liver
- Apoquel™ can cause rare intermittent GI symptoms
- For a 45-lb. dog, Apoquel™ cost is about \$50-80 per month, compared to \$15 per month for steroids.

Apoquel™ is a new anti-itching medication primarily designed to combat the effects of skin allergies in dogs. Traditionally, veterinarians have used anti-histamines (such as Benadryl™) or steroids (such as prednisone) to try to keep allergic dogs comfortable.

Antihistamines don't work all that well in dogs. A small population of dogs with allergies can show a good response, but many only experience drowsiness.

Steroids are almost always helpful in dogs with allergies, and they are inexpensive. But

they come with a myriad of undesirable side effects, including increased thirst, hunger, and need to urinate, and over long periods they will cause liver damage and a type of endocrine disease called Cushing's Disease. Some dog owners also note their dogs become irritable when on steroids.

Apoquel™ affects many of the inflammatory pathways



that steroids inhibit, but it is not a steroid, so it does not cause any of the short-term or long-term side effects. A small percentage of dogs (comparable to those on placebos) have a small amount of vomiting or diarrhea.

The big downside to Apoquel™ will be cost, because it is a patent-protected prescription drug. You can expect it to be around three times the cost of steroids (which are very cheap, mind you). However, we believe that the significant comfort that Apoquel™ can provide, along with the elimination of side effects, make it a very promising drug.

Anti-Itch Medication	Antihistamines	Steroids	Apoquel™
Efficacy	Generally poor	Very effective	Very effective
Side Effects	Drowsiness	Excessive thirst, hunger, and urination; long-term damage to liver and susceptibility to Cushing's Syndrome	Rare (2%) vomiting or diarrhea, resolves with removal of drug
Cost	\$0.25 per day	\$0.40-0.50 per day	\$1.60-5.00 per day
Safety	Very safe, difficult to overdose	Requires weaning off drug when halting	Cannot be used in pregnant, lactating, or nursing animals; no use permitted in dogs under 12 months of age
Drug interactions	None	Cannot be used with arthritis drugs (NSAIDs) and can affect use of drugs that require liver metabolism	None known