

Cold Case Cockers

Cassidy, Case #2008-03

Aged at four years old, Cassidy came to us from the Harris County Shelter a little over a year ago. He arrived with sarcoptic mange and a severe eye infection. Both conditions were easily treated and cleared up long ago.



Today Cassidy is a love-bug who sleeps *under* the covers and plays fetch like a pro, dropping the ball in your hand after he retrieves it. He is housebroken and is great with kids. He was adopted to a family who loved him but reluctantly returned him because his skin allergies were bothering their own allergies.

Cassidy's skin condition was caused by food allergies. After a few months of trying different foods and watching for a reactions, Cassidy's foster mom determined he's a vegetarian! He eats vegetarian dog food and loves

his fresh veggies, especially carrots.

Cassidy gets a little itchy from time to time, probably from seasonal allergies, and needs regular baths. He also gets daily eye drops for dry eye, because his eyes don't produce enough tears. This condition may be caused by the eye infection and could improve over time.

With a little effort you too will discover what Cassidy's foster mom already knows – for all you give, you will be rewarded tenfold with love and loyalty.

Food Allergies in Dogs

The food allergy is one of the itchiest conditions experienced by a dog. The variety of processed food proteins our dogs eat may be changed into substances the immune system sees as foreign invaders and attacks. While the GI tract or other organs can be targeted, it is usually the skin that suffers from this activity.

A widespread myth is that your dog does not have a food allergy if he has been eating the same food for years and the itching is a new symptom. Actually, a food allergy takes time to develop; most dogs have been eating the offending food for some time with no trouble.

The most prevalent food allergies for dogs are beef, dairy and wheat. Other common allergens include chicken, pork, corn, and soy, as well as dyes and preservatives. Merely switching to a new diet will not work, as the dog will likely be exposed to the same allergens. Two ways to address the food allergy are to feed a diet based on a novel protein and carbohydrate sources (venison and potato, fish and sweet potato, egg and rice, etc.) or a new approach using hydrolyzed proteins, where a conventional protein source has been broken down into molecules too small to irritate the immune system.

Regardless of the approach, it can take 8 to 10 weeks for the dog to respond to a trial diet. During that time, it is important that treats are based on the same diet and no unnecessary medications are given. Chewable heartworm preventives should be replaced with tablets. Remember that all commercial diets have a 100% guarantee. If your dog reacts badly or doesn't like the food, it can be returned for a complete refund. And finally, all treatment, trials, and changes in medication should be supervised by your vet.

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- > Dogs who have been with us six months or longer and have not found homes
- > Older dogs
- > Minor health issues such as special food, daily eye medications, post ear surgery or suffering from allergies.
- > Behavior issues such as not liking other dogs or cats, separation anxiety, fear of strangers or just being "quirky."

We never give up solving our cold case files.

Dogs featured as Cold Case Cockers are available for adoption. Please e-mail cockerinfo@swbell.net for information on adoption.