



## Richland Animal Hospital

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# A NEW TREATMENT FOR DOGS WITH ALLERGIC DERMATITIS AND ATOPY

Monthly Newsletter

February 2014

Skin problems which cause chronic itching are the 2<sup>nd</sup> most common reason for dogs to visit a veterinarian. Our goal as veterinarians is to reduce or eliminate the itching, allow the skin to heal, and prevent recurrence of the itching cycle by diagnosing the reason behind the itch.

Allergic skin disease in our patients has always been a frustrating problem for veterinarians to treat, for our patients, and for our dog's owners.

Steroids have provided the most consistent medication to shut down the itch cycle in our pets, but the side effects from these drugs including increased thirst and urination, panting and ravenous appetites are very common. Longtime use of chronic steroid intake can also lead to many diseases including Cushings Disease, diabetes, and gastrointestinal ulcer problems.

A new drug has been introduced from Zoetis called **Apoquel** (active

ingredient is *Oclacitinib*). It is a novel targeted therapy that selectively inhibits key pathways involved in itch and inflammation associated with allergy. The drug specifically stops a system of pathways called Janus kinase 1 that are involved with signaling certain mechanisms in dogs that are key to causing pruritus or itching.

**Apoquel** has been found to be fast acting – by day 7 of a research study, 66.5% of dogs were considered itch free. It improved the level of itching and also allowed the skin time to heal. Quality of life was found to be greatly enhanced. The drug can be used as an alternative to a fast acting steroid in cases of flea allergy, food allergy, mange, and contact allergy issues allowing the veterinarian time to determine a specific cause of your pet's skin disease.

**Apoquel** is a tablet which is given twice a day for 14 days, then once daily for long term maintenance therapy. It has

been found to be well tolerated in dogs; and the most common adverse side effects were gastrointestinal upsets, which resolved once the medication was stopped.

This medication is exciting for **Richland Animal Hospital** and offers a new therapy for our chronic skin allergy patients, and as an alternative to the use of steroids in general for our dogs older than 12 months of age.

**Please contact our office or see our website for more information.**

