



**UW Veterinary Care**  
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

# CYTOPOINT

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

### What is Cytopoint?

Cytopoint is a new treatment for dogs with skin problems due to allergies to things in their environment – a condition we call **atopic dermatitis**. It is different from traditional drugs that treat itch. Cytopoint is a **biological therapy** – a type of non-drug treatment that works like your dog’s immune system. Cytopoint contains engineered antibodies, very similar to your dog’s natural antibodies. Your dog’s immune system normally produces antibodies to target bacteria, viruses, and other causes of disease. The antibodies in Cytopoint are designed to target and neutralize one of the main proteins in your dog’s body that causes itch. This helps reduce scratching, so the skin has a chance to heal.

### How well does it work?

Cytopoint does not work for every dog, but we estimate it helps in about 75% of cases. In some cases, the itch relief is dramatic and long-lasting; in others, it helps more modestly and/or may not last as long. Usually, the first injection will give you a good indication how well Cytopoint will work for your dog. If it doesn’t help, there are other treatments we can try. Often, several different treatments will have to be tried to find the one that works best for your dog – in the same way that allergic people differ in which medicine works best for them.

### How is Cytopoint given?

Cytopoint is a small, painless injection that your veterinarian gives under your dog’s skin, similar to a vaccination. After the injection, the itch usually is reduced within a few days, and the effect lasts for 4 to 8 weeks. The injection can then be given again, as needed. Every dog is different, so you will have to stay in touch with us to let us know when it’s time for the next injection. Usually, we give the first few injections once every 4 weeks. After this, it’s important for you to observe your dog’s scratching behavior daily – as soon as you see the scratching start again, it’s time for another injection.

### How long will my dog need Cytopoint treatment?

Unfortunately, dogs do not “outgrow” allergies – they are typically a lifelong problem, though we can almost always keep your dog very comfortable with treatment. Therefore, treatment of allergies usually is a lifetime process. Some dogs have more problems with itch during a particular season of the year. In this case, we may be able to give Cytopoint during the “bad season” and reduce or eliminate the treatment in the “good season.”

### Is Cytopoint safe?

One of the advantages of Cytopoint is its safety. It is safe for use in dogs of any age, and can be used with other medications and in dogs with other diseases. Because Cytopoint is an antibody protein, and not a drug, it is naturally broken down by and recycled by the body. We do not expect any adverse reactions to occur with Cytopoint. Though Cytopoint is a relatively new treatment, so far the worst effect that has been seen is that, in a very few dogs, it stops working after a few injections.



*See reverse*

## Is Cytopoint expensive?

The cost of Cytopoint depends on the size of your dog – the bigger the dog, the greater the cost. For smaller dogs, Cytopoint is reasonable in cost, and compares with other allergy treatments on the market. For larger dogs, each injection is more expensive. However, it is important to think about the cost in terms of things like how long the relief lasts (for example, if the effect lasts for 8 weeks in your dog, the overall monthly cost will be less), and reduced cost due to less frequent veterinary visits. Also, if your dog has great benefit from Cytopoint, you may decide it's well worth the expense to have that much relief.

## Can I use other medications with Cytopoint?

Yes you can, and often you should. The best approach to treating allergy is to find a combination of treatments that work together to create the maximum possible relief for your dog's allergies. For example, even occasional flea bites may cause dramatic worsening of itch in an allergic dog, so we always recommend year-round parasite control for allergic dogs. Many dogs with allergies have periodic problems with skin infections, so we may recommend antiseptic baths or sprays to prevent these from becoming a problem. Sometimes Cytopoint works well for the most part, but your dog may "have a bad itch day" now and then. In this case, we may recommend another medication that you can give as needed for the occasional "bad day." The important thing is that we work together to find the best combination of treatments that will provide ideal relief, as well as being convenient and affordable for you.

**CALL US 24/7**

608.263.7600 | 1.800.386.8684 | [uwveterinarycare.wisc.edu](http://uwveterinarycare.wisc.edu)