



## Interesting Case from our web site [www.fairfield-vets.co.uk](http://www.fairfield-vets.co.uk)



### "Reuben" - Golden Retriever with Atopy



Reuben

Skin problems are one of the most common reasons why people bring their beloved pet to the vets. They are rarely emergency cases but nonetheless they very often need proper medical care. Unfortunately, the cause of the skin problems is not always obvious so the dermatological investigation in these patients asks for some detective work.

Another problem that dermatologists come across is that initial clinical signs are very often vague and sometimes only after a couple of weeks or months, more obvious symptoms become apparent which leads to an easier answer.

Reuben, a young adult Golden Retriever was presented several times with mild eye problems. There was a persistent conjunctivitis with no obvious cause. Several tests to check for bacterial infection, dry eye and cytological changes revealed nothing abnormal.

About four months later, Reuben started chewing his feet and developed bilateral ear problems. This was the moment that I started thinking about a more generalised problem: an allergy.

Unfortunately, to diagnose an allergy there does not exist a simple test that gives us a straight forward answer. The only way of diagnosing atopy (similar to hay fever in people) is by comparing a good history with the clinical signs and thereafter eliminating all the differentials that can cause the same clinical signs e.g. bacterial, fungal and yeast infections, parasitic infestations and other allergies such as food allergy.

When discussing the history with the owners, I found out that Reuben's problems started when a couple of pet chickens were bought in. Of course Reuben loved his new mates so it would be a shame if they had to be strictly separated from each other.

Reuben went through a whole list of tests at the end of which he has been diagnosed with atopy. He just started a therapy with blocking injections, which is on long term a cost effective treatment with no side effects. If Reuben reacts well on the therapy, he hopefully can keep on playing a role in "Chicken run" without being concerned about his allergy.

Michele Lampens, MRCVS

This article is available on the Fairfield Veterinary Centre web site at [www.fairfield-vets.co.uk](http://www.fairfield-vets.co.uk)

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