**IL-31 Antibody Injection**

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Dr. Melissa Eisenschenk, DVM, DACVD

**Definition:** The IL-31 antibody injection (Lokivetmab or CADI) is a new treatment available for the management of itching from allergic skin disease. IL-31 is a substance that causes itching in most dogs with allergies, and this treatment is an antibody for IL-31, and so binds to IL-31 and deactivates it, thus decreasing itching.

**How Given:** It is an injection for dogs given subcutaneously, up to every 3 weeks, and can be combined with any other therapy for allergies and/or while a pet is on any other medications.

**Effectiveness:** In studies, 80% of patients achieved a significant, measurable improvement in itching as measured by owners. In 50% of cases, skin redness decreased as measured by veterinarians. This would be expected because this injection only helps itching, it does not control inflammation in the skin (other than that caused by itching) because it is not an immune-suppressive treatment. This injection is most helpful for pets who need additional itch relief while on other medications, as a sole therapy for pets whose owners have a hard time remembering medications, or for pets who are difficult to orally medicate.

**Side Effects:** One study showed vomiting, diarrhea, and lethargy in a small percentage of treated dogs. A larger study showed side effects not significantly above that seen with a placebo injection, further safety studies are ongoing. We have seen mild to moderate lethargy for 1-2 days after the injection. At this time, no blood work monitoring is needed for IL-31 antibody treatment, all current medications can be continued. This therapy has been widely used since fall 2015, so long term safety studies have not been performed.

**Should you carry this drug in your clinic?** This drug is expensive for large dogs. It is a nice option to add on top of current allergy treatments. It is not a good option for hotspots as it is not 100% effective and does not always decrease inflammation. It may take several days to work. It can be a frustrating treatment as clients will wait until their pet is itchy prior to calling to get another injection and by that time, the pet may have another infection and need other treatments. This is a nice option for an itchy puppy, but perhaps those clients should be developing a relationship with a dermatologist....