



Why Has My Pet Got Itchy Skin?

There are many, many factors which may contribute to itchy skin in our pets. The environment, diet, skin parasites, allergies, infections and concurrent health problems can each be enough on their own to cause itchy skin. The reality, however, is the majority of itchy pets we see have a **combination of two or more** of the following:

External factors

The general health of skin can be greatly affected by external factors. If they spend a lot of time swimming and their coat remains wet for extended periods, this can lead to skin damage. A dry, dusty environment can impact on the health of skin and so can a poor choice of shampoo. A diet low in essential fatty acids or missing other essential nutrients can also have a detrimental effect.

Parasites

Fleas are the number one reason pets get skin disease. Their potential impact can not be over-emphasized and they must be addressed in any case of itchy skin. There are also other biting parasites like lice, mites and flying insects that can contribute to itchy skin disease.

Allergies

Allergies to over 100 different triggers have been identified in pets. They are, however, most commonly allergic to fleas, house dust mites, grasses/pollens and foods such as beef or chicken. Management of any itchy skin condition will involve consideration of allergies as a potential factor.

Infections

All cats and dogs have bacteria and yeast on their skin; it's a naturally occurring phenomenon in healthy pets. These organisms, however, can multiply to clinically significant levels and cause itchy skin all on their own or cause a secondary, opportunistic dermatitis when something else goes wrong with the skin

Other health problems

Skin disease is not always just about the skin. Some pets may have other health problems that just happen to present with itchy skin as one of their clinical signs, or their skin may succumb to secondary problems while they are busy dealing with disease somewhere else in their body. There is a need to consider the possibility of hormonal imbalance, immunodeficiency and even cancer in some pets with itchy skin.

"caring for the pets of ipswich since 1967"

Drs Jason Wendt BVSc (Hons), Scot Campbell BVSc (Hons) MACVSc DACVN & Associates

Ipswich Vet Group Pty Ltd T/A Booval Veterinary Hospital ACN 010 432 916 ABN 89 010 432 916



Skin disease is a major health concern in pets but they don't have to suffer in silence. If your pet has itchy skin; we can help!

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