

# About The Most Frequent Dog Skin Problems

Contributed by Jason Homan

First I would like to say about skin problems is very important and helpful to people like myself who have concerns about their dogs.

Skin disease is a complication of many diseases. Only by careful examination, diagnostic tests and sometimes even trial and error can we come to understand what causes the source in a particular dog and how we can best control it

Several chemical reactions occur in the skin that stimulate the nerves, causing the brain to feel the itch. We treat a scratching pet by attempting to eliminate these reactions at the source and controlling the body's response to them as well. Some of the chemicals involved in itching are prostaglandins ointment, arachidonic acid (a specialized fatty acid) and leukotrienes ointment . By using treatments that inhibit the action of these factors at the skin level, such as antihistamines and fatty acid competitors, we can sometimes control the itching without using corticosteroids such as prednisone ointment. If we work to control other irritating factors such as fleas, dry skin and secondary bacterial infections we can also further reduce itching. Each of these steps is very important because pets have an "itch threshold". This is the point where all of the sources of itching finally add up to enough irritation to cause the irresistible urge to scratch. Just like pain thresholds, these levels vary from pet to pet. Control of every possible factor is important to your dog's health and comfort.

Skin infections occur secondary to irritation in some dogs. This can happen when dogs have allergies, hormonal diseases or after events like grooming or hunting. Skin infections can show up as scabs scattered in the hair coat, as excessive dander, as areas of hair loss - especially if there is scaling around the edges and through the presence of pustules or red blotches in the skin. They often will clear up on their own if they are due to an irritation that doesn't stick around. As dogs age, it is a little harder for them to clear up a skin infection on their own and you may find at some point that these irritations have to be treated with antibiotics even though your dog has been able to cure herself in the past.

It is expensive to care for a pet with chronic skin disease in many instances for precisely the reason you are dealing with. Finding medications that will control the problem is often possible but they often can not be discontinued without return of the problem. This is particularly difficult in big dogs since the medications are given according to size and cost more for larger dogs.

Cold water will usually reduce itching and produce temporary relief. Adding Episoothe Oatmeal Shampoo, Episoothe Oatmeal Ointment Rinse, Aveeno Colloidal Oatmeal, Relief Shampoo or Domeboro's solution helps to prolong the effect. All of these products are available over-the-counter. If you use Aveeno, one to two tablespoons per gallon of water, applied as a rinse, works best. Follow the directions on the Domeboro packet and also apply as a rinse. Shampooing will sometimes help to control itching. Some shampoos such as Pyoben and Oxydex, act to reduce the bacteria level on the skin, one cause of itching. Seba Lyt and other sulfur/salicylic acid shampoos reduce scaling. Lytar, Clear Tar and other tar containing shampoos reduce itching and oiliness. An emollient or moisturizer used after shampooing will restore some moisture to the skin and this also reduces itching.

Fleas cause most the allergic reactions in pets. Flea control is essential to our success in treating itchy dogs. Please ask for flea control information if you have any problem at all with fleas on your dog! Expar ointment Rinse can be used to kill fleas after itching and moisturize the skin.

Contact your veterinarian if your dog experiences drooling, vomiting, itching, changes in breathing rate, a diaper rash.

It can take persistence to figure out skin disease. Give your vets a chance to get this under control but if you reach a point where you feel strongly that you need to do something more, you could ask for referral to a veterinary dermatologist and obtain ointment to produce a local effect directly on the skin. If the irritation is severe or if the skin ointment seems to make your symptoms worse, discuss the matter with your veterinarian or pharmacist. If you notice anything unusual, tell your veterinarian or pharmacist.

Author's Resource: My name is Jason Homan. I was born in Detroit Michigan and moved to Denver at an early age. I have always been an avid animal lover for as long as I can remember. Interested in finding out more about the most frequent skin problems? Click here to visit my website [Askedweb.com](http://www.askedweb.com). Choosing a dog breed, finding dog breeders, is made easier with my site. Visit [Animal Pets & Friends](http://www.animalpetsandfriends.com) for more pet and animal articles.