



Hot Spots

Pyotraumatic dermatitis, commonly referred to as "hot spots," is a sudden painful inflammation of the skin. This skin disease is most commonly found in dogs and is recognized by owners as a wet, reddened area on the skin accompanied by hair loss and a foul odor. Damage to the skin is caused by the dogs obsessive chewing or scratching in an attempt to alleviate pain or an itch.

The initiating cause for a "hot spot" can be flea bites, ear infections, dirty or matted coats, allergies or contact irritants such as shampoos. The self-induced trauma may become so severe that red skin lesions and hair loss can appear in a matter of hours.

Treatment for hot spots includes correcting the underlying problem (fleas, anal sac irritation, ear infections). The skin itself is treated by removal of hair to the area to allow cleansing and air circulation. Antiseptic scrubs and astringents are indicated during the first few days of healing. Often times cortisone is needed initially to take away the inflammation which is causing the dog to traumatize himself/herself. As the wound heals, the skin will become dry and crusty. At this time, emollients are used to soften the skin. Oral antibiotics are frequently indicated to help clear up the skin infections.

There is no one preventive measure for "hot spots". Continual grooming, effective flea control and regular cleaning of your pet's ears are all steps to be taken to avoid this annoying and painful skin disorder.

Home care for Hot Spots

1. Keep hair away from the affected area.
2. Clean the area three times daily with diluted hydrogen peroxide and water until the moistness begins to subside.
3. Keep flies away from the pet as they may lay eggs on the wound which will develop into maggots.
4. Consult our office if self-trauma continues.