

Elands Veterinary Clinic.

CLIENT INFORMATION SHEET.

SKIN PROBLEMS



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Skin problems in dogs and cats may result from a variety of causes such as allergies, hormonal problems, parasites, bacteria, or a reflection of disease within the animal. These conditions will all have different methods of diagnosis, control and treatment, even though they may *look* identical. As you can appreciate, skin problems are therefore a complex and difficult area to deal with and patience is an essential component.

ITCHY SKIN.

There can be nothing more distressing than an animal which spends all its time scratching, rolling around, rubbing on the furniture and so on. It can be very annoying to both owners and pet, when no amount of creams, potions, disciplining or discouragement appears to have helped in stopping the animal. If this is the case, it is time to seek professional advice; - the animal may have an allergy to fleas, microscopic mites or lice, or even a reaction to carpet shampoo, grass or food. As you can see, with this variety of causes, it is important to try and diagnose the specific problem for each animal, and to treat the individual case appropriately - one dog in a household may be itchy *without* affecting other members.

HAIR LOSS.

Animals can lose hair without necessarily pulling or scratching it out. Diffuse hair loss, easily broken hair shafts etc, all indicate an underlying problem and it is important to seek veterinary advice. It is also important that the owner notices any other changes in the animal; for example, becoming snappy, lazy or changes in drinking habits or appetite. These all may be significant in the diagnosis of the problem.

OILY SKIN.

Oily skin is usually quite smelly as well, and owners complain of a "doggy" odour. The secretion of oils from the skin can change from normal in response to food (e.g. fat or vitamin/mineral deficient diets), parasites and other skin problems (e.g. mange), and a variety of other causes, so again it is important to seek professional help.

As you can see, with the variety of causes of skin problems, there are a large number of treatments which can be offered. Just because two conditions *look* similar does not mean they have the same cause or require the same treatment. Whether we send you home with pills or potions, keep your pet in hospital for further investigation or refer him to a specialist, rest assured that we have your animal's (and your!) best interests at heart.