

Rapidly Spreading Skin Infections in Dogs Called 'Hot Spots' can be Caused by Allergic Reactions

The dog's skin is the largest organ of the body, yet there is a very limited number of ways in which it responds to trauma. "Hot Spots" or [acute moist dermatitis](#) are areas on the dog's skin caused by your dog's itching, biting and scratching and may often develop rather abruptly. A lot of these places can become relatively large and can emerge anywhere on the dog. I find it quite often in the spring time once the temperatures are hotter and the humidity is higher. The dogs with the dense undercoat, such as Labrador retrievers, golden retrievers and rottweilers are susceptible to developing these kinds of areas on their face and neck. In many cases, areas located at the base of the tail are most probably because of fleas mainly because fleas prefer to gather in these places. A number of dogs happen to be so allergic to fleas, the bite of one flea is sufficient to trigger the dog to itch all over. Almost any injury can start the process which the dog then exacerbates by continual chewing and licking which in turn results in a vicious cycle and will cause the hot spot to spread.

The dog ordinarily has bacteria that lives on their skin and so long as the skin is healthy, the bacteria hardly ever cause any issues. But when an issue develops, for instance a fleabite, cut or allergic reactions, the dog begins to lick, bite, chew and scratch which will disrupts the defensive layer of the skin. When that occurs, the bacteria on the skin, as well as the germs in the mouth, set up housekeeping in the skin. This brings about a rapidly spreading infection which is often very painful. The spot on the skin is red, raw and seems moist because the wound oozes serum and pus. The hair then mats down over the wound and the infection then spreads beneath the hair.

A trip to the [veterinarian](#) is generally called for. Oftentimes the hair will have to be clipped away to stop the spread of the infection. Occasionally, these hot spots are so painful, the dog may need to be sedated in order to have the region cleansed and shaved. Antibiotics are given to manage the infection and follow-up antibiotics are sent home. Sprays, ointments and medicated shampoos may also be prescribed to continue treatment at home.. For some dogs, a special collar can be utilized that will prevent the dog from chewing at the places.

The root cause of the insult also needs to be tackled. If fleas are present, then year round flea control may be prescribed.(over the counter flea control is not recommended) Pollen, food, and other allergens can also precipitate an attack. Sometimes special diets with essential fatty acids and a novel protein source such as salmon, lamb or venison may be recommended to help heal the skin. Blood and skin tests can be preformed to help identify what the dog is allergic to and special allergy injections or prescription diets can be given.

Examine your dog daily for itchy spots and use [flea control](#) suggested by your veterinarian year round to help avert hot spots as a result of flea allergies. Routine grooming and brushing can keep mats from developing. If your dog is itching excessively, take him to the veterinarian to deal with the itching before the infection can progress.

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