

## Alopecia (fur loss) in dogs

### Overview

- Fortunately, alopecia in dogs is often treatable and rarely permanent.
- It can be caused by many different conditions including fleas, skin allergies and hormonal problems.
- It's important to have your dog seen by your vet if they start losing fur, especially because in some cases, it can be very irritating and painful.

### General information



Most dogs moult in cycles throughout the year, but this shouldn't cause their coat to become bald or patchy. Some dog's naturally lose fur in certain areas without it causing a problem, but suddenly losing fur in a new place or pattern could be a sign of a problem.

## Causes

Common causes of alopecia (fur loss) in dogs include:

- [Fleas](#)
- [Mite and Lice](#)
- [Skin Allergies](#)
- **Hormone disease**
  - Hormonal problems such as [hypothyroidism](#) and [Cushing's disease](#) are a common cause of alopecia in dogs.
- [Ringworm](#)
- **Contact alopecia**
  - Contact alopecia is when something rubs and shortens or removes the fur in an area. This is most common around the neck (if a dog wears a collar), on the elbows (if a dog lies on hard surfaces).
  - The skin in these areas sometimes becomes dark or develop calluses, but shouldn't be red, inflamed or crusty.
- **Wounds and scars**
  - Alopecia is common (and sometimes permanent) around infected skin, deep wounds and scars.
- **Skin infections**
  - Bacterial skin infections (such as [hot spots](#)) often cause red, itchy, bald patches.
- **Over-grooming**
  - Over grooming (grooming too much) often causes alopecia, saliva staining and red skin. It can be due to stress, pain or irritated skin.
- **Seasonal alopecia**
  - Some dogs develop harmless patches of alopecia in the autumn that don't regrow for 6-12 months. This can happen year on year.

- Seasonal alopecia is more common in certain breeds such as the Boxer, Bulldog, Doberman and Staffordshire Bull Terrier.
- **Inherited**
  - Alopecia can be an inherited condition, meaning it's passed down from a dog's mother or father.
  - Some breeds develop baldness e.g. hairless ears in the [Staffordshire Bull Terrier](#) and [Dachshund](#).
  - The Chinese Crested dog is bred to have no fur.

## Other symptoms to look out for

If your dog has alopecia, it can be helpful to check for, and tell your vet about other symptoms such as:

- Weight gain
- Weight loss
- [Changes in appetite](#)
- [Drinking more](#)
- [A rash or red skin](#)
- Bumps or scabs
- [Dandruff](#)
- [Itchy skin](#)
- Over grooming (licking and chewing more than usual)
- Patches of dark skin
- [Low energy \(lethargy\)](#)

## When to contact your vet

Contact your vet if you notice your dog losing fur. Skin problems can be uncomfortable and painful, and in most cases, the sooner they are treated, the sooner they will be back to normal.

You know your dog best. If you are concerned, it's always best to contact your vet.

**Am I eligible for PDSA veterinary treatment?**

## Treatment and home remedies

The best treatment for your dog will depend on what is causing their alopecia so it's always best to have them checked by your vet before trying any home remedies. However, once you have had a diagnosis from your vet, you may find some of the advice below useful:

- Protect any exposed skin against sun damage by avoiding the heat of the day and using pet safe sun cream.
- If your dog has contact alopecia, give them soft surfaces to lie on such as beds, blankets or mattresses. If it's around their neck, it's important to wash their collar regularly, check it fits them comfortably and keep the skin underneath it clean, especially during warm weather.

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