

Hot Spots in Dogs

Overview

- A hot spot is a patch of sore, infected skin.
- Hot spots can appear anywhere on the body and typically look red, angry and wet.
- Fortunately, hot spots respond very well to veterinary treatment.
- Book an appointment with your vet if you think your dog has a hot spot.

What is a hot spot?



A hot spot ('acute moist dermatitis') is an area of inflamed, infected skin. Hot spots are typically damp, red, smelly, sore, and sometimes have a scab on top. They often begin as something minor, such as an insect bite or graze, then become inflamed and infected when rubbed, licked or nibbled. Anything that causes a dog to chew or lick one particular area of their body can lead to a hot spot, for example:

- [Fleas](#)
- [Itchy skin](#)

- [Skin allergies](#)
- [Insect bites](#)
- [Cuts and grazes](#)

Hot spots respond to treatment very well but can cause much more serious problems if they aren't treated quickly.

Symptoms

Hot spots are sore, smelly, red, wet patches of skin. They are usually hairless and very easy to spot but can be more difficult if they develop under long fur.

When to contact your vet

If you see a hot spot developing, book an appointment with your vet straight away. It's important to stop your dog (and other pets) licking or scratching the hot spot, even before you see your vet. The best way to do this is by using a [buster collar](#), body suit or other protective device (such as a t-shirt).

Am I eligible for PDSA veterinary treatment?

Treatment

Treatment for a hot spot is likely to include:

- **A clip and clean** – clipping the fur around your dog's hot spot will allow air to reach it and speed up recovery.
- **Cleaning at home** - daily cleaning with salty water or a medicated shampoo (see wound cleaning instructions below).
- **Medication** - such as [steroids](#) (to reduce inflammation), and [antibiotics](#) (to fight infection) - these may come as cream or tablets.
 - It's important to be aware that antibiotics aren't necessary for every hot spot, your vet will advise what is best for your pet.

- **Prevent licking/nibbling/scratching** - you will need to stop your dog licking their hot spot by using a [buster collar](#), protective body suit or an old t-shirt.



What if it doesn't get better?

If your dog's hot spot isn't healing despite treatment, it's possible that they are licking, nibbling or rubbing it behind your back! Make sure they aren't able to reach it, and book another appointment with your vet.

Prevention

The best way to prevent hot spots is to keep your dog's skin as healthy as possible. Keep them up to date with their [flea treatment](#) and check their coat regularly. Seek veterinary advice as soon as you notice a hot spot or [unhealthy skin](#).

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