

# Hot spots (acute moist dermatitis) in dogs

## Overview

Hot spots ('acute moist dermatitis') are patches of sore, infected skin. Hot spots can appear anywhere on the body and usually look red, angry and wet.

Hot spots develop and grow very quickly, they tend to be very itchy and sore. Your dog will lick and worry at them which usually makes them a lot worse. Thankfully, hot spots usually respond very well to veterinary treatment.

Book an appointment at your vets if you think your dog may have a hot spot. It's best to deal with the problem quickly before it gets much worse. Try to stop your dog from chewing, licking or scratching the area.



*HOT SPOT ON A DOG*

## What is a hot spot?

Hot spots are areas of inflamed, infected skin. They are usually caused by something very minor (for example an insect bite or a graze). Once a dog starts to scratch, lick or

bite the area the hot spot will increase in size and get worse quickly. Bacteria will start to cause an infection. Hot spots are often smelly, have scabs on top and are very sore. The skin tends to be red, raw and looks wet. If a hot spot isn't treated quickly a more serious infection can develop.

## Signs of a hot spot

- Smelly, red, wet patches of skin (sometimes with scabs).
- Scratching, licking or biting one area of the body.
- Bleeding skin.



*CLOSE UP OF A HOT SPOT*

## When to contact your vet

Hot spots are painful and increase in size very quickly. If you see one developing, take your dog to the vet straight away.

Treatment will help to stop it spreading making your dog much more comfortable.

It is very important to stop your dog (or any other pets!) from licking or scratching the area as soon as you notice a problem. Your vet may give you a buster collar, body suit or other device, if you need one before you see your vet you can purchase one at a pet shop or online.

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

## Causes

Anything that causes a dog to chew or lick one particular area can lead to a hot spot. For example:

- Itchy skin
- Allergic skin disease (atopy)
- Insect bites
- Fleas
- Cuts and grazes

## Treatment

Treatment may include:

### Clipping and cleaning the area

Clipping and cleaning the hot spot allows air to reach the infected skin and speeds up recovery. Your vet will likely show you how to clean the area and help it heal.

### Medication

Your vet might prescribe a cream for you to put on the area to help reduce inflammation. They might give your dog steroids (to reduce inflammation) and antibiotics if they are necessary. **Antibiotics aren't always necessary** and in

some cases can make the situation worse. Your vet will tell you what is best for your pet.

## What if it doesn't get better?

Some dogs seem prone to hot spots and dogs who have skin allergies are more likely to develop them because their skin is more fragile. Fortunately, hot spots usually respond quickly to treatment.

Speak to your vet if your dog is regularly getting hot spots.

## Prevention

### Flea treatment

Make sure your pet doesn't have fleas by using a regular flea treatment from your vet.

Seek veterinary advice as soon as you notice a hot spot or unhealthy skin.

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