

Itchy skin in dogs

Overview

Scratching is completely normal behaviour - all dogs scratch every now and again. However, always book an appointment with your vet if your dog is itchier than normal, itchy skin causes a lot of discomfort and shouldn't be ignored.

Fleas are a very common cause of itchy skin but there are lots of other causes.

Your vet will investigate what the cause is and provide a suitable treatment.

Signs of itchy skin in dogs

Some of the signs of being itchy include:

- Scratching (more than 4-5 times a day and/or for more than a few seconds at a time)
- Licking or nibbling themselves a lot
- Coat colour change - usually a brown or pink tinge due to saliva staining from licking (see picture Red, sore skin, or a rash)
- Bald patches (alopecia) or a thin, patchy coat
- Always scratching or licking the same part of their body
- Pain when scratching (yelping or flinching)



Beware, some dogs scratch and lick in private! Keep an eye out for the symptoms listed above to make sure you spot any secret scratching.

Why does my dog have itchy skin?

- Fleas
- Allergic skin disease (atopy)
- Bacterial skin infection
- Fungal skin infection (e.g. malassezia or ring-worm)
- Mites or lice
- Immune system problems affecting the skin
- Medication reaction
- Skin lumps

When to contact your vet

Itchy skin can be very uncomfortable so shouldn't be ignored. Contact your vet if you notice any of the symptoms above.

Some conditions are very easy to treat, for example an infection or fleas.

Treating long-term conditions such as allergies, can be a bit more challenging and it can take a long time to start seeing progress. However, once you and your vet get on top of the problem you will notice a huge improvement in your dog's wellbeing.

You know your dog best. If they don't have the symptoms listed above but you are still concerned it's always best to contact your vet.

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