

# Dandruff in cats

## Overview

Cats spend a lot of time grooming to keep themselves clean. If you notice your cat has dandruff (dry, flaky skin) it could be a sign of a problem.

There are many possible causes of dry skin, fortunately, most improve with the right treatment. Contact your vet for an appointment if you notice your cat has dandruff.

## Dandruff explained

Skin cells are always dying, shedding off and being replaced by new healthy cells. Your cat will make sure their coat stays clean and 'dandruff-free' by grooming the old cells away.

Dry, flaky skin tends to be a sign of a problem, either a skin problem, an illness or a lack of grooming. As well as indicating a problem, dandruff is likely to make your cat itchy and uncomfortable.

Keep an eye out for other skin issues such as hair loss, red skin or a greasy or smelly coat. Other symptoms like these may help your vet find the cause.

## Causes

Dry, flaky skin can be caused by many different problems, including:

### Illness

- Cats often develop a greasy coat and dandruff if they are feeling poorly.

### **Arthritis**

- Cats tend to groom a little less once they get older, often due to arthritis and stiffness.

### **Pain**

- If your cat is in pain they will probably spend less time grooming.

### **Skin infections**

- Skin infections due to bacteria, yeasts or fungus (such as ringworm) can cause flaky skin.

### **Mites and lice**

- Parasites such as mites and lice usually cause very itchy, flaky skin.

### **Fleas**

- Fleas cause itchy skin, scratching can lead to dandruff.

### **Allergic skin disease**

- Atopic dermatitis, food allergies and flea allergies can all cause itchy, dry, flaky skin.

### **Other**

- Other diseases such as diabetes, Cushing's disease or liver disease.

## **When to contact your vet**

Contact your vet if you notice your cat developing dry skin especially if they are losing fur or seem itchy. Left untreated the problem will probably get worse.

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

Published: Jan 2019