

Dermatitis (red, inflamed, sore skin or a rash) in cats

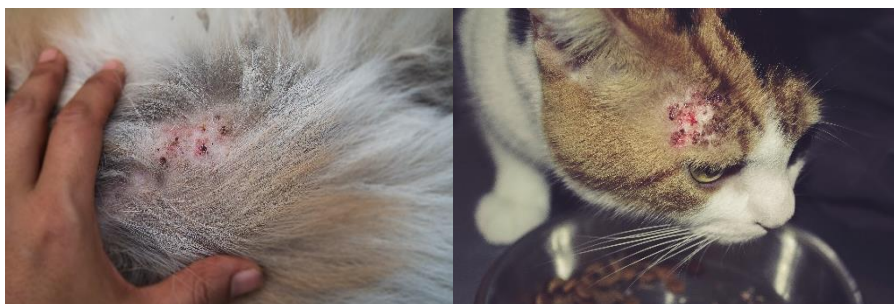
Overview

Has your cat got red, inflamed or angry looking skin? Do they have a rash? We often call these symptoms 'dermatitis'.

Skin problems can be very irritating and painful and can be caused by many different things. Dermatitis should always be checked by a vet, it's often something that can be easily treated but could be a sign of something more serious.

Symptoms to look out for

- Excessive grooming or scratching of affected areas
- A rash, spots or pimples
- Red, inflamed or sore skin
- Itchy skin
- Thinning fur or hair loss (alopecia)
- Dandruff (dry, flaky skin or scabs)
- Oily skin
- Smelly, weepy skin (pyoderma)
- Thickened skin



SKIN PROBLEMS IN CATS OFTEN CAUSE A CRUSTY RASH

Causes

Fleas and other parasites

- Fleas are a common problem in cats. They cause itchy, red, skin rashes, especially around the lower back, neck and head.
- Ringworm is a fungus which causes circular patches of red, raised, hairless, itchy skin. Fortunately, ringworm is quite rare in cats.
- Other parasites – for example mites, lice and ticks often cause irritating skin problems.

Allergies

- Allergic skin disease causes itchy skin and rashes.
- Food allergies often cause a rash and itchy skin.
- Severe allergic reactions can cause hives, rashes and swellings anywhere on the body. Contact your vet ASAP if you suspect your cat is having a severe allergic reaction – this is an emergency.

Skin infections

- Bacterial infections often cause red, inflamed circular patches on the skin that can smell pungent.
- Cat bite abscesses are very common. They often develop over a few days, causing a painful, red, hot swollen area of skin.

Bruises

- If your cat has developed a rash that looks like blood spots or bruising it could be a sign of an injury or a blood clotting disorder. This is something you need to see your vet about ASAP.

Other

- Sunburn is a common problem especially around the ears and nose of white and ginger cats. Sunburn can be very painful and eventually lead to a skin cancer called a squamous cell carcinoma.
- Feline eosinophilic granuloma complex is a skin condition caused by the immune system. It's a fairly common condition that causes lumpy, sore, red, crusty skin.
- Stress – some 'highly strung' cats will start over-grooming themselves making their skin sore if they are stressed.

When to contact your vet

Book an appointment with your vet if you notice anything wrong with your cat's skin – skin disease can cause a lot of suffering.

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.

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