

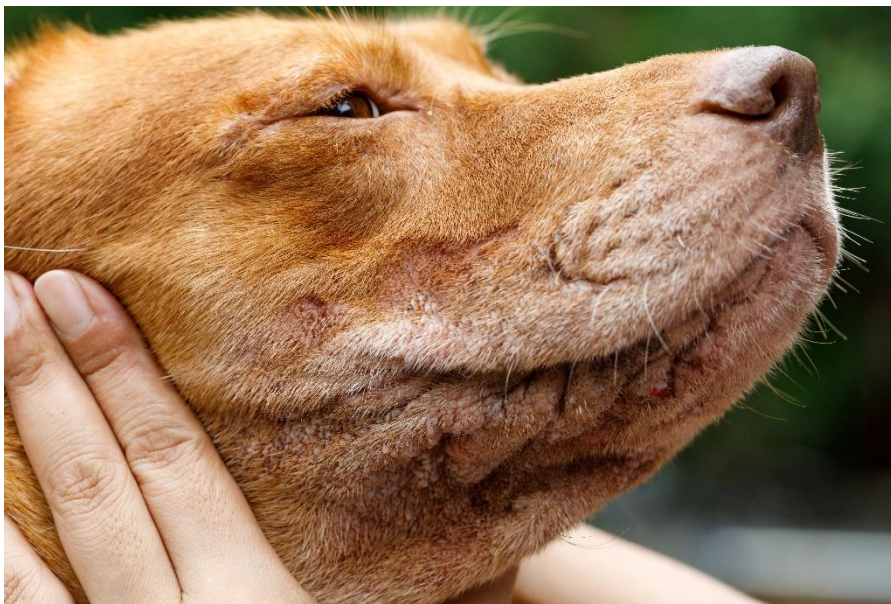
## Hair loss (alopecia) in dogs

### Overview

Hair loss (alopecia) means bald spots, patchy fur or just thinning fur. Parasites, hormone problems and allergies are all common causes of alopecia in dogs.

It's rare for alopecia to be permanent, with the correct treatment, it's likely your dog's coat will regrow.

Book an appointment with your vet if you notice your dog losing fur. Alopecia is likely to make your dog feel uncomfortable and miserable.



*This dog has alopecia around his mouth and eyes; he also has red, crusty skin.*

### What is alopecia?

Alopecia is a term used to describe either complete hair loss, patchy fur or thinning fur.

Most conditions that cause alopecia also cause other symptoms, these other symptoms can help point to a diagnosis. Keep an eye out for:

- Weight gain
- Weight loss
- Changes in appetite
- Drinking more
- Red skin
- Bumps or scabs on the skin
- Dandruff
- Itchy skin
- Over grooming (licking and chewing more than usual)
- Patches of dark skin
- Low energy (lethargy)

## Causes of alopecia

Common causes of alopecia in dogs include:

### Fleas and other parasites

- Fleas cause an intense itch and often alopecia around the lower back, inner thighs, around the neck and ears. Symptoms tend to be much worse if your dog has an allergy to fleas.
- Mites and lice often cause alopecia and crusty skin.

### Allergies

- Atopic dermatitis (atopy) causes itchy, inflamed skin and often leads to patchy fur.
- Food allergies often also cause skin problems.

### **Bacterial skin infections**

- Bacterial skin infections (such as hot spots) often cause red, itchy, bald patches.

### **Hormone disease**

- Skin and fur problems are a common symptom of some hormone diseases.
- Hormonal problems such as hypothyroidism and Cushing's disease both cause patchy alopecia and darkened skin.

### **Ringworm**

- Ringworm is a very contagious fungus (not a worm!). It causes circular patches of flaky, red, hairless, itchy skin.

### **Over-grooming**

- It's normal for a dog to groom but if they over groom they may start to develop bald patches.
- Over grooming can be due to stress, pain or irritated skin.

### **Seasonal alopecia**

- Some dogs develop harmless patches of alopecia in the autumn that don't regrow for 6-12months. This can happen year on year.
- Seasonal alopecia is more common in certain breeds such as the Boxer, Bulldog, Doberman and Staffordshire Bull Terrier.

### **Inherited**

- Alopecia can be an inherited condition, meaning it's passed down from a dog's mother or father.
- Some breeds develop baldness e.g. hairless ears in the Staffordshire Bull Terrier and Dachshund.
- The Chinese Crested dog is bred to have no fur. Having no fur can cause problems such as injury and sunburn.

## Scars

- Scars left after burns or wounds can leave patches of permanent hair loss.

## When to contact your vet

Contact your vet for an appointment if you notice your dog losing fur. The problem is most likely to be something minor but some of the diseases that cause alopecia are more serious and can make your dog miserable.

**You know your dog best. If you are concerned, always book an appointment with your vet.**

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