

Derm Digest

Indianapolis IN • Louisville KY • Marietta GA • Pasadena CA
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Animal Dermatology Clinic

Advancing the Art of Veterinary Dermatology

August 2012 **THE SUMMER ISSUE!**

Solar Dermatitis

Excessive sun affects pets, too.



*Dog exhibiting symptoms of solar dermatitis.
Note that pigmented skin is not affected.*

The term “solar dermatitis” refers to the damaging effects of the sun on the skin of cats and dogs. The effects of ultraviolet light on the skin of pets are usually cumulative and may not be seen until after prolonged sun exposure, often years! Although animals can experience sunburn, which causes a reddening of the skin similar to what is seen in humans, we more commonly see the more chronic effects of long-term sun exposure.

The sun-induced changes include hair loss, skin thickening and reddening, rough patches of skin, and the appearance of “blackheads”. Infections with bacteria can develop in these areas. The damage is most commonly seen in white cats and in light colored, short-coated dogs such as Dalmatians, American Staffordshire Terriers, Bull Terriers, Boxers, Bulldogs, and Great Danes.

In cats, the damage is usually seen on the ears and face. In dogs, the underside of the abdomen, the inner thighs, and the bridge of the nose may be most severely affected. Pets that spend time “sunbathing” outdoors or in front of open windows are at increased risk of developing solar dermatitis. The best treatment for solar dermatitis is to prevent further sun damage. The existing changes in the skin may only be partially reversible. Sunscreens can be applied to the skin to prevent damage when the pet allowed outside. *(continued, page 2)*

Foxtails: Skin, Ear and Nose Hazard

The bright green grasses of spring begin to dry and turn amber during these long days of summer. Although we rarely think about dried grass causing problems, one grass in particular can be troublesome to pets, the foxtail. There are many types of foxtails, but species *Hordeum* also known as “wild barley” is a frequent culprit of summer.

Nature is clever in assuring the survival of its species. For instance, the ubiquitous dandelion opens as a bright yellow bloom and later turns into a billowy ball and with only slight movement, it releases its seeds in a light breeze floating to a new location (many end up in my backyard, somehow).

The foxtail is ensuring its survival in a similar manner, releasing its spikelets as wild animals brush up against the plants and are carried on the animal’s hair. The animal is the transporter of the seeds where they will be released in a new planting location. *(continued page 2)*



The foxtail during early growth is bright green and supple. It turns dry and yellow in summer allowing it to release spikelets.

Photo left: Alina Zienowicz Photo right: USDA

Solar Dermatitis, cont.

Waterproof products with an SPF factor of 50 or higher are recommended, and should be applied at least 15 minutes before sun exposure. Zinc oxide-containing products should not be used. Dogs can wear T-shirts that have UV resistant qualities to further minimize sun exposure. Keeping the pet indoors and away from open windows between 10 AM and 4 PM is most helpful. Preventing continued sun exposure can help reverse some of the abnormalities in the skin.

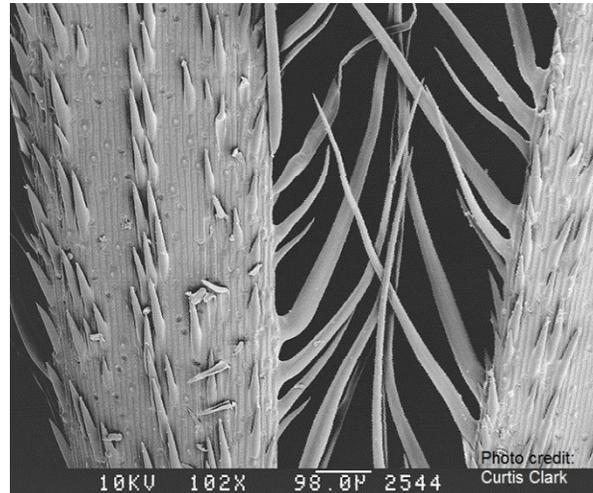
In some animals, antibiotics are needed to treat the infections that often occur in sun-damaged skin. If the sun damage is severe, we may recommend other medications to prevent or reverse some of the changes. Laser therapy can also be helpful in eliminating some of the more damaged areas of the skin to try and prevent severe changes. Sun-damaged skin is more prone to developing several types of skin tumors, which may need to be removed. Sun avoidance is most important in preventing the progression of the solar dermatitis into skin cancer. A biopsy of any tumor arising in sun-damaged skin is recommended. 🐾



Solar dermatitis may cause the appearance of "blackheads" which are plugged hair follicles. Skin tumors may develop in some cases.

**"MONEY WILL BUY YOU A PRETTY GOOD DOG, BUT IT WON'T BUY THE WAG OF HIS TAIL."
- HENRY WHEELER SHAW**

Foxtails, continued



Many wild animals have short coats and spikelets cause little harm to them. Perhaps you can recall being a courier of the foxtail plant finding spikelets in your socks with its persistent poking in your ankle after a walk through a field or overgrown urban lot.

Dogs with overgrown coats can get these spikelets and they are driven deeper into the coat with every movement, ultimately reaching the skin. Left unchecked, the foxtail can break and enter the skin, causing infection if left unchecked. More distressing to a dog is when a spikelet is inhaled into the nostril or enters the ear. The foxtail has barbs which allow it to move forward, but not backwards (see photo above).

Examine your pet carefully after entering areas with foxtails and brush the coat, do not overlook the armpit, ears and nostrils. Dogs experiencing discomfort will paw at their ears or sneeze in an attempt to dislodge the spikelet. Foxtails entering the ear canal can puncture the eardrum and cause deafness. Early detection and removal is the best treatment. 🐾

Photo above: Magnified detail of the foxtail showing the angled barbs. Below: A spikelet shown breaking off from the head of a foxtail. Photos: Curtis Clark



Summer Watch: Skunk!

It's a distinct odor recognized by nearly everyone and when your pet gets sprayed by a skunk, there is no mistaking the smell! Skunks are found across North America and have been quite adaptive to urban areas, so any pet that has access to an outside area has the potential of meeting this black and white stink machine. Summer is a particularly active time for skunks and with babies usually born in the spring, it becomes a family affair.

Although they are omnivores, skunks are fond of pet food and leaving it out is an invitation for an outdoor buffet line. Skunks will enter open garages where many cats often have their food and housing creating a showdown with only one winner (see picture).

Fortunately, the spray is not fatal, although it smells like it. If your pet gets sprayed, forget the often-mentioned method of a bath in tomato juice and instead try this tested recipe. Mix together:

- ¼ cup baking soda
- 2 teaspoons Dawn ® dish soap
- 2 pints hydrogen peroxide

Put on your pet-washing clothes and wear rubber gloves. Shampoo the solution into the hair, creating a lather. Rinse. Repeat. Avoid getting the solution in the eyes and mouth. Towel dry. A second application may be required. 🐾



Garage battle: and the winner is...our little feline friend pictured here took it in the face when she confronted a skunk eating her food. The recipe above was used to remove the scent. Photo left: D. Fruta, photo right: birdphotos.com

ADC Doctor to Lead Derm College



Dr. Rusty Muse of Animal Dermatology Clinic - Tustin has been named President of the American College of Veterinary Dermatology (ACVD).

The ACVD is the governing body responsible for the guidance and oversight of the membership of

boarded veterinary dermatologists in the United States. The ACVD also administers the annual board examination, organizes the annual meeting and addresses concerns impacting veterinary dermatology.

Dr. Muse has been very active and held numerous positions in ACVD and has been on the Executive Board for the previous six years and is the current Secretary of the College. In addition, he was the Publicity Committee Chair of the recently held World Congress of Veterinary Dermatology meeting held in Vancouver, British Columbia. That event drew 1,800 dermatologists and veterinarians from around the world.

His position as President will run for two years. "I am excited and honored to have been elected to this position with the ability to serve the College and to help guide and influence the specialty of dermatology," says Dr. Muse.

Dr. Muse is the third member of Animal Dermatology Clinic to hold this prestigious position. Drs. Craig Griffin and Wayne Rosenkrantz have also been past presidents of the College.

The doctors and staff at Animal Dermatology Clinic are equally excited for Dr. Muse as he embarks on his new leadership role at the ACVD.

Pet pictures wanted! Have you submitted a picture of your pet? Go to our site at www.animaldermatology.com and upload a picture into our Pet Gallery. We would love to have your pet included in the gallery! Problems uploading? Send a message via the Contact Page and we will help you.

Pet Events in Your Area

The following events are listed for informational purposes only. Please contact the organization prior to attending as schedules may change without notice. Animal Dermatology Clinic has no affiliation with these events.

Louisville, KY

Saturday, August 18 6PM

2012 Tuxes & Tails Benefit Gala & Auction presented by Brown-Forman

Marriott Ballroom (second floor) of the Marriott Louisville Downtown, 280 W. Jefferson
Join the Kentucky Humane Society as we roll out the red carpet for a starry night to make dreams come true for homeless animals in our community! The evening begins with a silent auction, open bar and hors d'oeuvres, followed by a three-course dinner and spirited live auction. The celebration continues into the night with music, dancing, and adorable, adoptable pets. Black tie optional.

- \$150 Individual Tickets
- \$1,800 Table Sponsor (8 seats)
- \$2,500 Silver Sponsor
- \$5,000 Gold Sponsor

Atlanta, GA

Monday, September 3, 8AM

Action Dash Run/Walk & Fun Run

at Piedmont Park, Atlanta, GA

Price: \$15-\$30

Phone: 404-881-1191 x5603

Age Suitability: All Ages

The Action Dash is a family-friendly 5K run/walk created by Action Ministries to provide hunger, housing and education solutions to help our neighbors in need move toward independence. Join us and become an action hero! Hero Racers are encouraged to run, walk or stroll in their favorite action hero costume to bring awareness to poverty-related challenges in Georgia. And don't forget your favorite pet, they can dress up too! Let's race together to help beat the cycle of poverty.

Danville, IN

August 25, 2012 Saturday 10am – 4pm

2nd Annual Ride to Rescue

Hendricks Co. Senior Services Center

1201 Sycamore Lane

Danville, IN

Motorcycle ride starts at 10am and the festival runs from noon until about 4pm.

Casa Del Toro Pit Bull Education invites animal lovers from across Indiana to join us in a moving, peaceful display of standing against animal fighting and abuse.

Call 317-586-8024 for registration information or more information.

San Diego, CA

Sunday, September 9, all-day event

Surf Dog Surf-A-Thon!

All day to until it ends

Admission: Free to attend, \$35 to enter

Surf Dog Surf-A-Thon is a fun event at Del Mar Dog Beach that raises funds for orphaned animals at Helen Woodward Animal Center! The activities include a dog surfing competition, a human surfing costume contest, a Beach Bum Bikini Babe Canine Costume Contest.

Long Beach, CA

Sunday, August 19, 8:30 AM 2:30PM

7th Annual Pet Fair in the Park

Sponsored by the So Cal Animal Response Team

(SCART)Long Beach Marine Stadium Park

5225 E Paoli Way Long Beach, CA 90803

Stop by this pet friendly event to learn about disaster preparedness for pets and their families while walking around beautiful Marine Stadium. Pet microchipping, low cost vaccines, dog agility demonstrations & much more.