

Derm Digest

Indianapolis IN • Louisville KY • Marietta GA • Pasadena CA
Marina del Rey CA • San Diego CA • Tustin CA



Animal Dermatology Clinic

Advancing the Art of Veterinary Dermatology

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Hot Spot ...or Not?

One of the most often used terms to describe an area of irritation on pets is “hot spot”. When pet owners describe their dog’s lesions as “hot spots”, they might be asked what that actually means to them and to explain what they are describing as a “hot spot”. Many times, what is initially referred to as a “hot spot” is simply a bacterial infection and the approach and the diagnostic implications of these two things can be completely different.

What exactly is a “hot spot”?

Hot spots are areas of irritation on the skin produced by *self-trauma*. Unless the patient has created the lesion on the skin due to scratching or biting it is NOT a “hot spot” by definition. The initial source of the itch to the particular area may be caused by an allergy, ear disease or parasites. To seek relief from the itch, the patient will scratch or chew creating a surface irritation and inflammation.

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Support Your Local Shelter or Pet Rescue



At this time of year please consider a donation to a local shelter near you. Nearly all shelters and pet rescues operate on shoestring budgets and rely largely on volunteer support and donations.

Call a shelter and ask if they have a particular need for items, if not money perhaps it could be towels, blankets or pet food. Medication that your pet no longer needs might be usable at a shelter, just call and ask.

In the print version of this *Derm Digest* page 4, selected shelters and rescues have been listed in each of the cities Animal Dermatology Clinic is located. There are many, many more that need and would appreciate your support.



“Hot Spot” continued from page 1

The result is a red, moist and raw area (see picture) that may be accompanied by matted hair that has accumulated fluid and blood and will develop adherent crusting to the skin. These lesions can develop rapidly, literally overnight. Most hot spots are located on the side of the face, neck, rump or tail. Surface infection or overgrowth of bacteria are generally present as well.

Crusted lesions and pustules indicative of a bacterial pyoderma are often *incorrectly* called hot spots by pet owners. It is true that a hot spot often develops a degree of infection but infections that develop on the skin are NOT hot spots. An infection is the growth of bacteria in a break in the skin or hair follicle. The infection and a hot spot may present similarly but the approach to treatment is different.

For a hot spot, identification of the underlying cause of itching is key. First the hot spot must be treated to bring comfort to the dog and then address the cause of the irritation. To treat a hot spot, topical or occasionally oral glucocorticoids may be needed to help break the itch cycle. In addition, topical or oral antibiotics are often needed to treat the surface infection. Once that is controlled, investigation into the cause of the itching that created the hot spot becomes important. While generally for bacterial pyodermas, topical and oral corticosteroids are contraindicated and may only result in persistence or recurrence of the bacterial infection. Oral or topical antibiotics in these cases will resolve the infection. In cases where bacterial infections may be pruritic, antihistamines are a better choice. However as with hot spots, continued investigation as to the cause of the bacterial infection will be important to prevent and manage relapse.

Source: David Duclos, *Canine & Feline Skin Diseases*

Pet Obesity: A Growing Problem

“She’s not fat, she’s fluffy!”



As America goes, so go our pets? There have been numerous reports regarding the expanding waistlines of the population, but that trend is also mirrored in our pets, with one pet food manufacturer claiming that 60% of pets in the U.S. are overweight.

Just like people who are overweight that can suffer from health problems, an overweight animal might face diabetes, arthritis, heart and lung disease. Dermatologists may see infections

in fat rolls where bacteria gets trapped.

Occasionally there can be a medical reason such as hypothyroidism or Cushing’s disease that is contributing to the obesity.

There are many guides to help determine the ideal weight of your pet or ask your veterinarian to help you in determining that number.

If you are not sure what the ideal weight of your pet should be, a good start would be to feel her rib cage. Place your hands on the rib cage with your thumbs over her spine. If you can easily feel the ribs, then your pet is probably a normal weight. If ribs are visible, then your pet may be too thin. If you can feel fat between the skin and ribs, or if the ribs are difficult to feel, your pet is overweight. Cats that have a large abdomen that swings when the cat walks indicates obesity.

Ask your veterinarian for guidance before changing your pet’s diet, although a sensible start would be to cut back on treats or eliminate them altogether. Increased exercise will also help burn those calories; a daily walk will do wonders for your pet...and you, too. Bonus!

Employee Spotlight: Marc Reyes



Marc is the lead technician in the Tustin, CA clinic.

Marc has had experience in emergency and general veterinary technician duties. He decided to apply his skills to dermatology in 2005.

He has met his educational, work-hours and hands-on training to sit for his exams to become a registered veterinary technician.

In his time away from work, he and his daughter enjoy family events and amusement parks. Marc enjoys watching sports and participating in them as well: snowboarding, basketball and running to name a few.

To you, it's an animal. To me, he or she is an adopted son or daughter who is hairy, short, walks on all fours and doesn't speak clearly.

Did You Know?



Prairie dogs are not dogs. A prairie dog is a kind of rodent.

Dachshunds are the smallest breed of dog used for hunting. They are low to the ground, which allows them to enter and maneuver through tunnels easily.

The Maine Coon cat is America's only natural breed of domestic feline.

Boxers are named for their playful habit of using their front paws in frolic.

Even Rescues Need a Holiday

As the holidays approach consider a donation to your local shelter. Listed are just some of the rescues and shelters that are working diligently to place pets, spay and neuter and provide medical care to homeless animals. Please consider adoption from a local shelter when it comes time to get a new pet. Animal Dermatology Clinic has no affiliation with these organizations and are listed for informational purposes.

Atlanta Humane Society
981 Howell Mill Road NW, Atlanta, GA
404-875-5331

The AHS is the oldest private charitable organization in Atlanta, founded in 1873 following a visit to the city by Robert E. Lee. The animal charity was originally chartered to protect women, children, and animals and remained a child protection and animal welfare society for 79 years. The Shelter, now a widely recognized pet adoption center, clinic, and educational program provider, was originally located on Marietta Street and moved to its present location at 981 Howell Mill Road in the 1930s. AHS does not euthanize for time or space.

Glendale Humane
717 W. Ivy St, Glendale, CA 91204
818-242-1128
 Email: info@glendalehumane.org

The Glendale Humane Society provides a compassionate no kill haven for dogs and cats while transitioning them into loving permanent homes. They foster a positive relationship between people and their pets through education. As a non-profit organization, we rely on private donations and receive no funds from local, state or federal government. Their goal is to ensure as many dogs and cats as possible receive the second chance for life they deserve.

Shamrock Pet Foundation
Louisville, KY
(502) 585-3220
 Website: www.shamrockpets.com

The Shamrock Pet Foundation is a non-profit organization whose mission is to end pet overpopulation, reduce the number of companion animals destroyed in local shelters, and to save or enhance the lives of animals in need in our community. This is accomplished through spay/neuter, education, emergency medical assistance, rescue, foster care, and the adoption of pets into loving lifetime homes. They are a group of highly committed, unpaid volunteers who have a passion for our mission and its goals

Animal Assistance League of Orange County
15102 Jackson St.,
Midway City, CA 92655
 Website: www.aaloc.com

The Animal Assistance League of Orange County is a non-profit no kill humane society dedicated to aiding lost and homeless pets, helping people with pet related problems, promoting responsible pet-ownership and pet population control, and preventing cruelty to animals through educational programs. Donations may be made on their website.

Humane Society of Indianapolis
7929 N Michigan Rd
Indianapolis, IN 46268
Neighborhood: Indy Metro
(317) 872-5650
 Website: www.indyhumane.org

The Humane Society of Indianapolis is the leading voice for the welfare of animals and improving their quality of life. IndyHumane is the first choice in providing direct services for shelter cats and dogs, including adoption, foster home placement, behavior training, appropriate medical care, and affordable spay/neuter services. As the voice for the animals, IndyHumane brings together like-minded animal-focused individuals and groups to educate the public about animal welfare issues and concerns. *For over 100 years, it's all about the animals.*

Helen Woodward Animal Center
6461 El Apajo Road, Rancho Santa Fe, CA 92067
(858) 756-4117

Helen Woodward Animal Center is a unique, private, non-profit organization dedicated to saving the lives of animals and enriching the lives of people. For more than 30 years, our no-kill Center has provided humane care and adoption for orphaned animals, as well as animal-centered educational and therapeutic programs for people. The Center is a dynamic, evolving institution that is an agent of change for the animal welfare world. Not only are we operating innovative and beneficial programs for animals and people, but we are teaching others around the world how to successfully market and promote their programs and stop the senseless death of thousands of animals.