

UNDERSTANDING “HOT SPOTS”

What are “Hot Spots”?

Pyotraumatic dermatitis commonly known as “Hot Spots” are bacterial infections of the skin associated with inflammation. It can be extremely uncomfortable for the animal.

What are the main causes of “Hot Spots”?

- Commonly caused by *Staphylococcus intermedius* bacteria.
- Skin infections occur when the surface integrity of the skin has been broken.
- The skin has become macerated by chronic exposure to moisture.
- Normal bacterial flora have been altered.
- Circulation has been impaired.



What are the risk factors?

- Allergies e.g. fleas, food.
- Parasites, especially *Demodex* mites.
- Fungal infections.
- Endocrine diseases e.g. hypothyroidism, sex hormone imbalance.
- Immune incompetency, especially in young animals.
- Conformation e.g. coat length, skin folds.
- Trauma due to grooming, scratching or irritants.
- Foreign bodies e.g. thorns, grass awns.



What is the treatment for “Hot Spots”?

- Your veterinarian will most likely clip or shave the hair from the affected area.
- The affected area may then be washed with an appropriate shampoo.
- The lesion can then be dried and a suitable ointment applied.
- These ointments may contain antibiotics to eliminate the surface bacteria as well as an anti-inflammatory to alleviate pain and inflammation.
- In certain cases it may be necessary to put your pet on a course of oral anti-inflammatories and/ or antibiotics.
- In most cases the skin will return to normal condition within 7-10 days.
- It is important to identify and remove any of the predisposing causes to prevent recurrence.

Are certain pets more prone to developing “Hot Spots”?

- Certain dog breeds with thick coats such as Rottweilers, Golden Retrievers, Labrador Retrievers, German Shepherds and St. Bernards tend to be more prone to “Hot Spots”.
- “Hot Spots” tend to be more common in warm, humid climates.



What preventative measures can you as the owner take to prevent “Hot Spots” occurring in your pets?

- Ensure proper flea control.
- Avoid having the animal spend excessive amounts of time swimming.
- Groom long-haired dogs regularly.
- Avoid sudden changes and extreme variations of your pet's normal diet.

Acknowledgement of pictures: www.thepetcenter.com



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