

## THE DRY SKIN SYNDROME

Many household pets suffer from dry, flaking, scaling skin. Sometimes there is severe itching. It is a year-round problem in some pets, or more often appears only during the winter months when the heat is turned on in the house. Dry types of heat, such as electric and radiant, dry the coat much worse than in houses where humidifiers are included in the heating system.

“Dry skin” is a result of the outer layer of the skin losing excessive amounts of moisture. When this outer layer dries out, it begins to become brittle and flake off. This causes the skin to become dry, brittle, and flake excessively.

Dry skin has many causes including the environment, infections, parasites, hormonal imbalances, hereditary, and dietary disorders.

“Dry skin” often persists for life -- requiring long-term therapy to keep the problem under control. The major complications of “dry skin” include bacterial skin infection and self-trauma due to scratching and/or chewing.

Unfortunately, there is NO “magic cure” for “dry skin.” Treatment involves cleansing the skin of loose flakes, removing harmful bacteria, and moisturizing the skin with rinses and/or sprays. Moisturizing products serve as a replacement for the natural skin moisture.

Over-the-counter pet shampoo is often a factor that makes the problem worse. We often hear, I just gave my pet a bath, and now it is scratching & itching worse. This is due to a difference in the pH (acid content) of the pet’s skin and the over-the-counter products. Products available through the veterinarian are pH adjusted for the pet’s skin. This is the same problem that results when “human” shampoo is used to bathe the pet.

Follow the below listed directions to keep the problem controlled. Remember that this problem requires **REGULAR, CONTINUOUS THERAPY** to prevent complications. **THERE IS NO CURE** -- only proper skin maintenance to control it.

Bathe in the prescribed medicated shampoo as needed. Odor or excessive flaking are signs another bath is needed. We recommend a bath every 7-14 days, depending on severity of the flaking. Use only the medicated shampoo prescribed. Wet the pet thoroughly, apply soap, and scrub in well. If more lather is needed, add more **WATER** -- not soap. The soap is very concentrated and a small amount is all that is needed. Leave the soap on the skin for 5-10 minutes before **RINSING THOROUGHLY** to give it time to loosen the flakes. Repeat if required to remove all the loose flakes and scales.

Apply the moisturizing spray **LIGHTLY** once each day. I prefer to spray it on your hands--then rub it into the pet’s skin thoroughly. If sprayed directly on the pet, part the hair so that the spray will make direct contact with the skin. **DO NOT OVERUSE** -- a little is all that is needed.

Notify the clinic if you do not see significant improvement within 2 weeks of proper therapy.