



HOT SPOTS

What is a “Hot Spot?”

A more correct name for a “hot spot” is acute moist dermatitis or pyoderma, which is a rapidly developing bacterial infection of the skin.

What Caused This Sore?

Your dog did it! It is the result of trauma to the skin by licking, chewing, or scratching. The cause of the initial itch may be impacted anal glands, infected ears, external parasites, allergies, or any minor skin irritation. These sores have a rapid onset (hours or less) and are red, moist, glistening, and acutely painful.

The outer dry layer of the skin is removed, hair is lost, and the lesion spreads rapidly. It becomes infected secondarily by a wide spectrum of bacteria—many of which are the natural inhabitants of the surface of healthy skin.

In advanced cases, the dog may actually chew through its skin and into the fat and muscles underneath! Skin infections occur when the surface integrity of the skin has been broken, the skin has become macerated by exposure to moisture, normal bacterial flora have been altered, circulation has been impaired, or the immune system has been compromised.

This is a dog problem and rarely occurs in cats. It is not contagious to other pets (except in the case that the underlying cause, like skin parasites, may be contagious). It tends to be more common on long-haired dogs, but can be seen on any type of dog. We will sometimes see a similar pyoderma in the facial folds of English bulldogs or the lip folds in Cocker spaniels, but on most dogs it involves the body trunk, rear legs, or the face and neck.

How is It Treated?

Usually it is managed by clipping the hair from the affected area (which may require sedation or even anesthesia). Some of the exudate may be examined under the microscope to be sure the underlying cause is not overlooked. The skin is cleaned with a disinfectant and then antibiotic-cortisone sprays or lotions are used on the sore. Often systemic cortisone and/or antibiotics are indicated too.

Is This Going to Happen Again?

Maybe! It depends on the underlying cause of the problem and your dog’s temperament. Does your dog have infected ears? Or Allergies? Or impacted anal glands? Or parasites? Whatever the underlying cause, it must be treated to help prevent a return of these sores.

Keep a little of the topical medicine on hand, and if you see your pet starting to chew a sore into its skin, treat the spot immediately. Often this will calm the itch and prevent a nasty sore.

Special instructions: _____

Thank you for this opportunity to serve you!