

How to Stop Itching in Shelter and Foster Home Dogs

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Itch-What is it? How much is too much?



Google images

Canine Pruritus Scale courtesy of Dr. Peter Hill (just google it!)

Extremely severe itching / almost continuous Itching doesn't stop whatever is happening, even in the consulting room (needs to be physically resti

Severe itching / prolonged episodes
Itching might occur at night (if observed) and also when eating, playing, exercising or being distracted

Moderate itching / regular episodes Itching might occur at night (if observed), but not when eating, playing, exercising or being distracted

Mild itching / a bit more frequent Wouldn't itch when sleeping, eating, playing, exercising or being distracted

Very mild itching / only occasional episodes
The dog is slightly more itchy than it was before the skin problem started

Normal dog - I don't think itching is a problem



Major Causes of Itch in Dogs

- Parasites
- Infections
- Allergies
- Other Causes



PARASITES

- Easy to See
 - Fleas
 - Lice
 - Ticks
- Need Microscope
 - Demodex
 - Sarcoptes
 - Cheyletiella
 - Otodectes

Fleas-the #1 cause of ITCH



Lice-species specific!

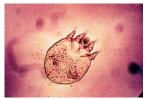


Ticks



Sarcoptes (scabies)-severe itch!







Cheyletiella-scaling on the back, less itchy









Otodectes (ear mites)-head and neck





Demodex-hair loss with or without itch







Infections

- Bacterial (Staphylococcal)
- Yeast
- Dermatophytosis (ringworm)

Key Points-Staph and Yeast

- Bacterial and yeast infections are caused by overgrowth of normal body flora
- · Not contagious
- · Almost always occur together
- Cannot differentiate by "looks alone"
- Commonly misdiagnosed as "ringworm"



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Bacterial infection 'rash'





Itchy dogs typically have yeast overgrowth









Crusting, scaling, hair loss (bacterial, not ringworm!)





What about ringworm?

- Over diagnosed in dogs
- Bacterial infections commonly misdiagnosed as "ringworm"





Looks like, but is not "ringworm"





Dermatophytosis-consider 'risk group'





Adult Dogs-Debilitated



ALLERGIES

- Flea allergy dermatitis
- Atopic dermatitis (environmental allergies)
 - -Seasonal or year round
- Adverse food reactions
 - -Always year round!!
- "Atopic like dermatitis"



Flea allergy dermatitis





Classic behaviors

Allergies-After flea control they all look similar!!





Asking the "Right" Questions

- Is the dog ill or does it look unwell?
- Any medication history for any disease?
- Do you have any history about the skin disease?
 - Medical records, receipts
 - Drug history
 - Medication bottles
- Any history of flea or other parasite control?
- Any history of contagion?



Itching after contact?



Fleas
Scabies
Cheyletiella
Ear Mites
Chiggers-orange dot
Contact with short
coated dogs

"Does the dog itch?"

- What do you see if you watch the dog for 5 minutes?
- What behaviors do you see?
 - Nibbling, rubbing, rolling, licking, scooting.....
- Does the dog "gag"?
- Is there excessive shedding?



Unraveling Clues from the Dermatological Examination

- Itch trumps all other dermatological problems
- If itch is present, then almost all other clinical signs are somehow related
- Itch almost always leads to secondary infections
- Evidence of "cure it pattern" or evidence of "life long manageable disease"



Dermatology TPR

- Hair plucking (trichogram) or skin scraping
- Ear swab cytology in mineral oil
- Ear swab cytology for staining
- Skin cytology (scotch tape or glass slide)



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Is there a parasite pattern or suspicion?









Extremely severe itching / almost continuous
Itching doesn't stop whatever is happening, even in the consulting room
(needs to be physically restrained from itching)

SCABIES!!!

Severe itching / prolonged episodes
Itching might occur at night (if observed) and also when eating, playing, exercising or being distracted

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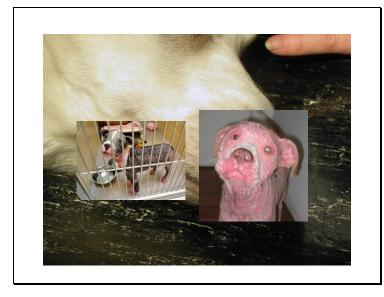
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Hair Trichogram





Ear swab cytology mineral oil





Is there evidence or suspicion of a skin or ear infection?



Exudate and/or Odor



Scales and scales pierced by hairshallmark of microbial overgrowth





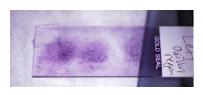


Chronic foot licking? Ear debris? Ear itch?

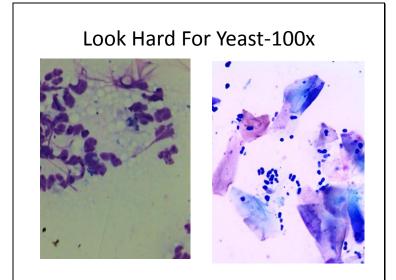
Skin cytology

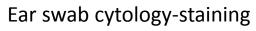














Scotch Tape To Find Demodex!



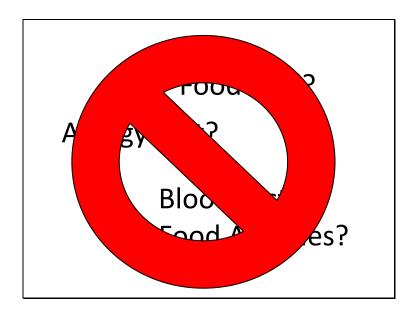
Cultures from 'scaling'



Where to Start When You Don't Have a Clue

- Is the dog sick?
- Rule out demodicosis (Hair Trichogram)
- Rule out ear mites (Mineral Oil Ear Swab)
- Look for yeast on ear cytology
- Look for yeast on skin cytology
- Wood's lamp-beware the greasy dog
- Fungal culture-is the dog high risk?
- Bacterial cultures?





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The Six Week Plan-Veterinary

- Treat for fleas and contagious mites
 - Selamectin every 2 weeks for 6 weeks
 - Moxidectin/imidacloprid every 2 weeks for 6 weeks
- Treat Skin Infections
 - Topical prescription antibacterial/antifungal shampoo 3x a week for 6 weeks
 - Systemic antifungal (ketoconazole)-4 weeks
 - Systemic antibiotics (based upon culture)-4 weeks



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When Systemic Antibiotics Are Not An Option

- Topical focal therapy with antibiotic ointment
- Whole body treatment
 - -2% chlorhexidine bath/spray
 - Accelerated hydrogen peroxide bath/spray
 - -Bathe 2-3 times a week, spray daily



The Six Week Plan-Shelter Staff

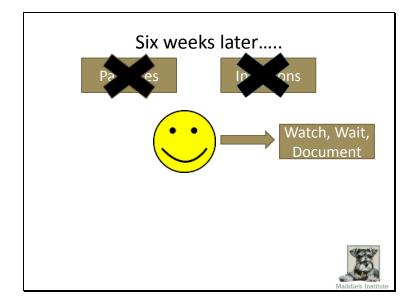
- Groom the hair coat
 - Easier to assess the skin changes
 - Improves dog's appearance
 - Easier to bathe
- Bathing at least once a week
 - Start with cleansing shampoo
 - Use medicated shampoo
 - Pre-dilute shampoo 1:4 before applying
 - Massage, massage, massage.....

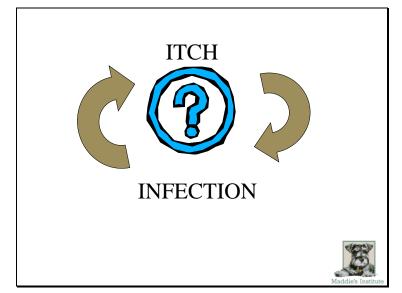


The Six Week Plan-Foster Family

- · Flea control for all dogs and cats.
- Groom the hair coat! Clip it, comb/brush it.
- Plan to bathe, bathe, bathe... no you will NOT dry out the skin....
- Follow the parasite control plan
- Follow the infection control plan
- Keep "Itch Scale" notes
- DO NOT CHANGE THE DIET





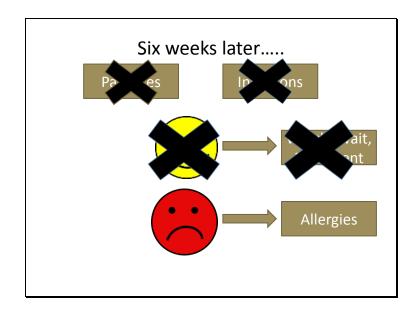


Watch, Wait, and Document

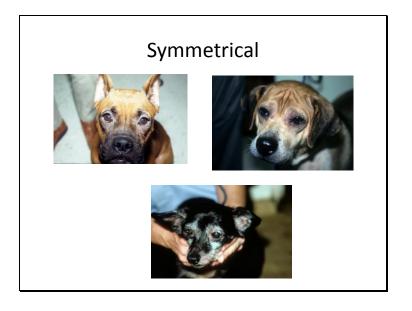


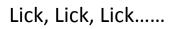
- Write a summary of treatment including products and application
- DO NOT STOP FLEA CONTROL
- DO NOT CHANGE FOOD
- Watch for signs of relapse of itching and/or rash
 - -Unknown if just a one time trigger
 - -Unknown if trigger is seasonal





















Itchy butt? It's not anal sacs it's allergies!



Recurrent Skin Infections!



Recurrent Ear Infections!!!!







Role of Foster Family Post Triage

- Determine what the immediate plan is
 - Symptomatic care and stabilize until a family is found
 - Further diagnostic testing
- Important: Must CONFIRM itch is year round before pursuing a food trial or allergy testing!

Foster Family Care For All Allergy Dogs

- · Maintain year round flea and tick control
- · Maintain good coat hygiene
- Use good topical therapy
 - Control infections and relapses
 - Relieve itch
 - Control odor



How To Bathe An Allergic Dog

- Recipe
 - One itchy dog
 - Two bottles of shampoo (grooming and medicated)
 - Small container and measuring cup
 - Loofa gloves
 - Lots of towels
 - Bath tub
- Instructions
 - Prewash with prediluted shampoo
 - Lather and massage, massage
 - Rinse well
 - Forget the timer
 - Frequency is more important than time



Bathing Products

- Good cleansing shampoo for the prewash!
- Benzoyl peroxide shampoo with moisturizer
- Chlorhexidine
- Chlorhexidine and miconazole
- Chlorhexidine and ketoconazole



Controlling the Itch

- Ears and eyes-focal topical steroids
- Bathing for comfort and to control bacterial and yeast overgrowth
- Careful use of topical spray steroids
- · Essential fatty acids-long term, slow onset
- Antihistamines?-controversy about efficacy
- Cyclosporine-effective but expensive
- Oral glucocorticoids-as little as possible



The foster family and the flea allergic dog

- Relapses
 - Flea control?
 - What is the behavior?
 - Increase bathing to control infections
 - May need a few days of oral steroids if flare is acute and severe
- Relapse in face of good parasite and infection control suggests another allergy



Foster Family and the Suspect Food Allergic Dog

- Year round problem: How do we know the diagnosis?
- Blood allergy test results-not valid diagnostic test
- Feed a complete and balanced commercial diet
- Avoid food trials unless the dog has concurrent gastro-intestinal disease



The foster family and the dog with environmental allergies

- Medical management of the itch
- What about allergy testing?
- Don't allergy test unless immunotherapy is an option



What everyone needs to know

- Life long skin disease
- · Controlled but not cured
- Dog will always require some type of topical and/or systemic treatment
- As much as is needed, but as little as possible
- Goal is quality of life



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Don't fear the itch, you can do A l	OT	in
a short period of time!!		



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