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## Skin Conditions

When a skin problem occurs, your dog may respond with excessive scratching, chewing or licking.

Fleas are the most common cause of skin disease in pets - even in pets where they never seem to have fleas. For this reason, pets with itches, rashes, hair loss, and over grooming are placed on a treatment trial for fleas first. It is absolutely essential that all animals your pet is in contact with are using regular flea prevention too.

Other important causes of skin problems include:

1. Bacterial and fungal infections
2. Ear mites and skin mites
3. External parasites
4. Insect bites hypersensitivity
5. Atopy (house dust and pollen allergy)
6. Food intolerance/allergy
7. Metabolic diseases
8. Stress or Anxiety
9. Combination of the above

If there is no response to the flea treatment trial, and there are no underlying diseases found, our vet will likely need to investigate for food and environmental allergens. These investigations will require dedication from you and your family to eliminate and trial different food, product and environmental factors.

To determine which disease is causing your pet's skin problem the vet will complete a physical examination. It is likely they will also need to conduct some laboratory testing to make sure there are no underlying diseases, bacterial or fungal infections causing the skin issue. These tests help guide the next steps in your pet's treatment and aid in longer term control.

**The following tests may be conducted:**

1. Blood testing, looking for underlying metabolic diseases
2. Skin Scrape, looking for mite parasites
3. Microbiology, looking for bacteria and yeast
4. Skin allergy testing
5. Food trial, to rule out food allergy
6. Skin biopsies

Some skin conditions require lifelong medications, others lifelong vigilance and occasional medication.

We understand that skin conditions can be frustrating, and we are dedicated to working with you to manage your pet's skin problems.

**Regular check ups and readjusting of medication is often necessary to provide the best care.**