

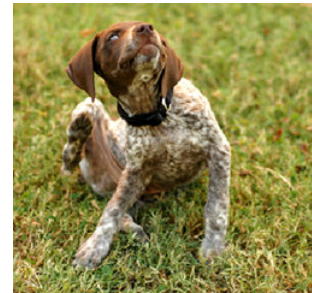
ARKLE Veterinary Care, LLC

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Skin & Ear Conditions in Dogs and Cats

Skin and ear conditions in dogs and cats can have multiple causes. If your pet is itching, has dry flaky skin, odor, sores or hair loss or head shaking, the cause may be fleas, other parasites such as scabies, dry skin, hormone problems, bacterial, fungal (ringworm), behavioral, allergies to food, allergies to airborne particles, autoimmune disorders, cancers and sometimes, idiopathic (unknown).

The cause of skin and ear problems cannot be determined by outward appearance alone; many different diseases can look exactly the same. Laboratory tests, therapeutic trials and recheck examinations are necessary to find the cause and the appropriate treatment. In order to successfully and safely treat your pet's skin/ear problem, cooperation between you and your doctor is essential. In many cases, superficial infections must be identified and treated, then the underlying conditions that caused them diagnosed and treated after the infections are resolved. Skin disease cases usually require a minimum of 3 visits to resolve clinical signs, and chronic or severe cases may require months to life-long therapy with regular examinations by the veterinarian. Many cases of skin disease have underlying disease which is not curable, but is often controllable with consistent supportive care.



At ARKLE Veterinary Care, we try to diagnose and treat problems and not just treat symptoms. We often see pets put on lifelong cortisone for scratching (treating the symptom), which increases the risk of serious side effects such as diabetes, immune system suppression, increased risk of infections, adrenal gland disease and water retention. Because there are potentially fatal reactions if your pet is suddenly taken off cortisone treatment, our goal is to eliminate or minimize cortisone use in your pet. Instead, we take a methodical, step-wise approach to identify all the diseases present and treat them specifically, which results in a more comfortable pet with fewer repeated episodes of skin disease and fewer side effects from medication.



Some of the tests your doctor may recommend include:

1. Flea comb examination
2. Skin scrapings to check for mites
3. Cytology of the skin and ears
4. Culture for fungus and or bacteria
5. Blood & urine screening tests
6. Blood tests for hormones
7. Dietary trials
8. Skin biopsies
9. Antibiotic trials
10. Allergy testing

Although all of these tests may not be done on the first visit, and may not be needed in every case, they may be recommended during later visits depending your pet's response to treatment.

As you can see, the correct treatment for your pet's condition can be complex, and take a bit of time, especially in long standing cases, but with patience and cooperation between you and your doctor, a lot can be done to solve the problem and keep your pet more comfortable and healthy.