

CANINE “HOT SPOTS”

What are “hot spots”?

Acute moist dermatitis or “hot spots” are a common skin disorder in dogs. “Hot spots” can appear suddenly and become large red, irritated lesions in a short time.

What is the cause?

“Hot spots” are the result of intense chewing and licking. The inciting cause is usually an insect bite reaction. Fleas, ticks, biting flies and even mosquitoes have been known to cause acute moist dermatitis. Allergic skin disease can also cause or contribute to the formation of “hot spots”.

What does a “hot spot” look like?

It is usually a large, raw, inflamed and bleeding area of skin. The area becomes moist and painful and begins spreading due to continued licking and chewing.

What does treatment involve?

The underlying cause should be identified and treated, if possible. Flea and tick preventives should be applied at the time of treatment. Anti-inflammatory medications and antibiotics are often used to relieve the intense itching and to combat secondary skin infection. These may be injectable drugs, oral tablets and capsules or topical preparations. The area is usually clipped and cleaned to facilitate applying any sprays or ointments on the affected area.



What is the prognosis?

Good with treatment. The condition usually resolves as rapidly as it developed.

Is the condition likely to recur?

Unfortunately, dogs that have “hot spots” are more likely to experience recurrences. Flea control and proper bathing and grooming are your best defenses against future “hot spots”.

*This client information sheet is based on material written by Ernest Ward, DVM.
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