



PET PAGES

Official Yellow Pages for Animal Lovers

See Color Proofs Online: www.PetPagesNA.com/ Sarasota/ Ad Number 36

Pet Pages – For the South West Florida Edition

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Skin Disease Made Easy

Our beloved pet can often show signs of skin irritation or skin disease. Several categories of problems exist and can be grouped into commonly occurring diseases. Some are specific to a breed or age group, while others are related to the environment or metabolic disease. With a careful diagnostic plan, these disorders can be correctly identified and will lead to a healthy, happy pet.

Parasites are a constant problem in many locations. Mosquitoes, fleas and ticks are not only nasty irritants but can also carry more serious diseases. Other biting insects such as fire ants can cause severe discomfort in our pets. Avoidance of infested areas or appropriate insect control will keep these pests at bay. Antihistamines or other medications may be needed to offer relief from itching if a severe problem has occurred.

Mange is another common problem caused by mites such as demodex or sarcoptes. This disease requires a microscopic exam to definitively diagnose and treat the mites.

Allergies are a common condition that causes itching, licking, chewing, biting and general discomfort. Often allergies are multiple, and require detective work to find the main offending irritants. Food allergies are very common in dogs, and any ingested ingredient can become an allergen. Common offenders are the grains and meats that are in most commercial foods, but even the "good ingredients" can be a problem if the body has started to react to them. A limited diet where all ingredients are monitored is essential to find the offending ingredient. Treats, chew bones and snacks need to be scrutinized for their ingredients as well. Once the problem is under control, you can add ingredients one at a time until you find out what is good or bad for your pet. Environmental allergies are often not so easy to narrow down. Pollens, plants and trees can cause

skin disease in animals just as they may cause hay fever in humans. Blood testing or skin allergy testing can detect the offending problems. Once the allergen is identified, elimination from the pet's environment is crucial, but sometime allergy desensitization shots may be helpful. Antihistamines, antioxidants, omega fatty acids or other immune system stimulants may benefit those with less severe or seasonal disease. Your veterinarian may also prescribe interleukin inhibitors such as Apoquel or Cytoint. Household environments can also be full of irritants. Strong scented soaps, cleaners, detergents, fabric softener, plug-ins or fresheners can irritate the skin or mucosa. Detective work and patience are needed to discover the offender.

Many metabolic diseases manifest as a skin disease. Hair loss can be caused by Cushing's disease, kidney disease, genetic conditions, age related diseases, thyroid disorders, emotional disturbances, and from any number of cancers. These problems require a complete veterinary exam and blood work, as well as cytology or biopsy to determine the cause and treatment.

Secondary skin infections often complicate skin disease. The infections need to be treated, but the underlying cause of the irritation must also be diagnosed and treated. Many shampoos and conditioners, along with the previously mentioned medications will keep may infections under control. If an infection is severe, or keeps returning, cultures can be taken to find an appropriate antibiotic or antifungal to treat the disease.

Being the detective is the hard part. Keep a log on when the itching or problem occurs – is it in a certain location, time or is it seasonal? Do they itch more inside the house or outside? Is it right after eating, or when they sleep in a certain location? Is it stress related, or does it only occur with a certain food or treat?

Approved By _____ Date _____

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Looking for parasites in your house and yard, as well as on your pet is something that you should always do when you see them irritated. Your veterinarian can help you eliminate the secondary infections and find an underlying disorder. Just as allergies make humans miserable, and may not be able to be fully eliminated from our lives, our pets suffer too. Any

help in finding the underlying cause or finding the right palliative treatment to relieve the itching and irritation will be greatly appreciated by our beloved companions.

**West Coast Veterinary Center
Drs. Beth Brown & Terah Browing
941-925-2262,
7910 State Rd. 72 Sarasota.**

“I Didn’t Realize My Dog Was In Pain!”

This is a common realization I get when talking to pet parents, especially with the early signs of arthritis.

So, What Are The Signs Of Pain?

Pets often hide it, so make sure to look for pain in their regular calm life, rather than when they are excited. There are various ways they can show pain without crying.

- slowness, or stiffness, when getting up from lying down
- slowness or reluctance going up the stairs
- increased difficulty getting into the car
- more quiet, less interactive with the family
- not moving as much
- restlessness, getting up and down
- changes in how they walk, especially a limp
- increased grooming or licking a specific area
- house training accidents

What Can I Do To Help?

The first thing to do is talk with your veterinarian! They can often recommend supplements or medications.

Physical Therapy

At West Coast Veterinary Center, we can assess your pet and put together a plan that best fits you and your pets needs, lifestyle and budget. This may include teaching you how to massage at home, exercises and an appropriate exercise plan. We also offer water treadmill, laser therapy, therapeutic exercises, mobilizations, acupuncture and chiropractic therapy, and can educate you on what these are and whether your pet can benefit from these.

Helpful Hints...

Bring your pet in when you notice signs of possible pain. Saying it’s just “old age” ignores the underlying problem, which we can help! Just because your pet is older doesn’t mean they can’t age gracefully- we would love to help your pet live the best life, and as long as possible!

**West Coast Veterinary Center
Dr. Liv, DVM MPH CVSMT CCRP CVA
941-925-2262,
7910 State Rd. 72 Sarasota.**

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