



## Bio-Life International Ltd



### The Nature of Skin Conditions in Dogs, Typical Symptoms & Most Common Causes

Responsible pet ownership means a proper diagnosis of any physical symptoms of distress. Unfortunately, in many cases of the "itchy, scratchy, irritated" dog, it is likely that the dog will already have seen a Veterinary Surgeon and the condition is a chronic recurring one of indeterminate source that may be environmental and nutritional compounded by secondary bacterial infections and influenced by genotype (breeding)!! This is a category that can benefit from a holistic approach including natural foods, supplements, house dustmite treatments & chemically friendly, medicated skincare such as MediCleanse™. However, it is important to understand that there are some categories that should be seen by a veterinary surgeon if they have not already done so.

#### Categories that should be seen by their Veterinary Surgeon include:

- Puppies of 1 year or less who may be suffering from one of the very serious genetic disorders or Type 1 diabetes
- Dogs, 7 years of age or more, overweight, lethargic &/or drink a lot of water that may have type 2 diabetes, underactive thyroid or kidney problems

#### Categories at risk if they are not on flea/roundworm control programmes e.g. Stronghold:

- Young or rescue dogs that have clearly suffered from stress, poor nutrition & healthcare in early life who may be prone to demodectic mange or ringworm
- A country rambler/hunter that comes into contact with foxes and other wildlife that may have sarcoptic mange often miss-diagnosed as atopic (allergic) dermatitis

## Typical Symptoms of problem skin

Problem skin typically means that the dog has one or more of the following:

**Pruritis** – Perennial (non-stop) itching.

**Seborrhoea** – Excessive production of sebum i.e. greasy, matted coat often smelly because of yeast infections namely *Malassezia furfur* or *Pityrosporum ovale*.

**Erythema** – Reddening and darkening of the skin

**Dermatitis** – Inflammation of the skin with intense irritation, itching & licking either at selected areas of the body or all over

**Pyodermatitis** – Inflammation of the skin with intense irritation, itching and licking with extensive secondary bacterial infections of damaged skin

**Moist Eczema** – “Hot spots” or crusty lesions - dermatitis with secondary bacterial or fungal infections

**Hyperkeratosis or demodicosis** – Excessive skin cell reproduction similar to psoriasis in humans – skin cells reproduce every 4 days instead of 28 days.

**Pyrrhoea** – Skin thickening and scar tissue

**Follicular dysplasia or alopecia** – Hair loss and bald patches, often genetic (breed associated) and location varies according to breeds

**Acral lick dermatitis or Lick Granuloma** – Persistent, obsessive licking & chewing of certain areas leading to repeated episodes of self-mutilation, partial healing then repeated trauma & healing. Usually confined to an easily accessible forelimb.

**Pyoderma** – Pus filled lesions or weeping sores caused by secondary infections of damaged skin

**Secondary Infections** – Bacterial, fungal and viral infections that are taking advantage of the depressed immune-system and anaerobic (low aeration) and abrasion of the skin, the most common being:

- *Staphylococcus intermedius*
- *Acanthosis nigricans*
- *Staphylococcus aureus* (bacteria) & MRSA (antibiotic resistant)
- *Malassezia pachydermatitis* (fungus – yeast)
- *Escherichia coli* & *Micrococcus luteus*

**Parasitic dermatitis** – Dermatitis caused by fleas, ringworm or mites (mange)

The age of the dog, the breed and the combination of symptoms all contribute to diagnosis or at least elimination of certain conditions.

## Common causes of problem skin in the dog

In order of frequency, the main causes of skin conditions are:

- Flea allergy & roundworms or tapeworms
- Dustmite allergy
- Food & nutritional allergies/intolerances
- Chemical sensitivities to flame retardants in carpets & furnishings; parabens, fragrances & other additives in toiletries, plastics, & floorings
- Parasites – Mites (mange), ticks & ringworm
- Genetic & neuropathic (breeding, nervous & behavioural)

Flea bite allergy, roundworms and tapeworms are the commonest that you have a proper flea & control programme in place. The second is dustmite closely followed by nutrition & chemical. Distinguishing between these can be extremely difficult and in many cases, the dog is allergic to a whole host of things.

It is also important to note that nutritional allergies may be the third most important cause in terms of diagnosed incidence but nutrition plays a key role in every skin condition in the dog because it is what is known as a "predisposing" factor. If the nutrients in the food are lacking because of poor quality ingredients or heat destruction in processing or the food contains additives and preservatives that interfere with absorption or are even toxic, the first symptom is often problem skin and a dry coat. Nutrition is key to a healthy immune system and any owner who thinks they are saving money with cheap dog food is likely to have to spend 10 fold at the veterinary surgery!

According to Veterinary experts, around 70% of itchy, scratchy dogs are allergic to dustmites and these are ubiquitous in modern homes with central heating, closed windows and skin cell rich soft furnishings for food and shelter. Dustmite and/or food allergies often precede chemical sensitivities and at the last count, there are some 208 categories of flame retardants, insect repellents, bleaches, coatings, disinfectants and cleansers with irritant properties commonly used in the home not to mention the Benzoyl peroxides, Sulphur Compounds, Coal Tar, Parabens, Preservatives, Fragrances & SLES used in the toiletries commonly used to treat the long suffering dog!

**The following may benefit your dog:**

- [Naturesdiet™](#) - Meat, biscuit & chews
- [Bones from the butcher](#) – AND NO OTHER TREATS!
- [Bio-Life HomeCleanse™](#) - for dustmite in pet bedding & furnishings
- [Bio-Life Fabricleanse™](#) – for dustmite in carpets
- [Bio-Life MediCleanse™ Shampoo & Conditioner](#)
- [Bio-Life MediCleanse™ Pure Essence or Paw & Patch Gel](#) plus [Paw & Patch Moisturiser](#) depending on the condition
- [Garlic](#) as a natural tick & flea repellent & [Kelp & Omega 3 & 6](#) to help restore thyroid & immune function