

Flaky, Oily, or Dry Skin in Dogs

The causes and treatments of a dog's flaky, oily, or dry skin.

CAUSES OF FLAKY, OILY, OR DRY SKIN

Endocrine disorders: Hypothyroidism (dryness, thickened folds) or hyperadrenocorticism (Cushing's disease).

Congenital/Inherited disorders: Primary seborrhea/seborrhea oleosa (common in American Cocker Spaniels, English Springer Spaniels, Basset Hounds, and other breeds), cutaneous ichthyosis (Doberman Pinschers, Rottweilers, Irish Setters, and other breeds), congenital hypotrichosis (Chinese Crested, American Hairless Terrier), follicular dysplasia/color dilution alopecia (most common in Doberman Pinschers, but also in Dachshunds, Italian Greyhounds, Greyhounds, and other breeds), black hair follicular dysplasia (Papillons, Bearded Collies), alopecia X (Siberian Huskies and other Husky-type breeds, Pomeranians), or pinnal alopecia (Dachshunds, Whippets, and other breeds).

Parasites/Parasite-borne diseases: Demodectic mange or sarcoptic mange.

Allergies: Atopy (allergy to inhaled substances), fleas, or food.

Infectious diseases: Pyoderma (bacterial infection, often secondary to other conditions such as allergies, endocrine problems, seborrhea or parasites), dermatitis caused or complicated by bacteria, viruses, fungi ("ringworm") and/or yeasts (often secondary infections), or secondary seborrhea due to bacterial and/or yeast infections.

Trauma: Skin irritation and abrasion (often self-inflicted) or burns.

Immune-mediated disorders: Contact hypersensitivity.

What to do: Most cases of flaky, oily, or dry skin are not emergencies, but your dog still needs veterinary care. Call your veterinarian during regular office hours to make an appointment for diagnosis and treatment.

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Have a health question about your dog? Ask our vet expert or ask other dog owners on our forums.