

## Head and Shoulders

### **How to eliminate doggie dandruff.**

*Jon Geller, DVM*

Q. We have a 4-month-old Australian Shepherd-mix. We feed him holistic dog food. His coat is very soft and shiny but has terrible dandruff. Should we mix some liquid vitamin E in his food or is this just temporary due to the dry air in the house during the winter months? A. Dry, flaky skin in a dog can often be a condition similar to dandruff in people. Sometimes it is made worse by low humidity or wintertime dry heated air, but in general, it will not improve without treatment.

Fortunately, it responds well to the same medicated shampoos that people use. Try a good dandruff shampoo and see how it goes. If there is no improvement, I would recommend a visit to your veterinarian. There are also some prescription shampoos that may be helpful.

Adding vitamin E in reasonable amounts to your dog's food may help dry skin in general, but probably will not clear up the flaking dandruff. Be careful about adding too much oil to the food because this can add considerable calories. In small amounts it can be an effective coat conditioner.

Omega 3 and 6 fatty acids may be helpful as well, but you should have your dog thoroughly checked out to rule out any other skin diseases first. Best, Jon Geller, DVM

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