

## Dog's Hair Loss Is No Laughing Matter

**When a dog loses hair on its tail, it can be a sign can be a sign of a more serious problem.**

*Jon Geller, DVM*

Q. My dog is losing hair on his tail. Is this normal? Do I need to take him to vet right away?

A. Hair loss on the tail can be a tell-tale sign of Cushing's disease, a hormonal disease caused by overproduction of cortisol (a steroid) by the adrenal gland. Other signs of Cushing's disease include drinking more water, increase in appetite, and a pot-bellied appearance.

Left untreated, other more serious signs will develop, including vomiting, diarrhea, weakness and loss of appetite. Cushing's disease is diagnosed by a blood test that is quite accurate. Several treatment options involve different medications.

Hair loss anywhere on your dog's body could also be from parasites (mites, lice, fleas), an infection (pyoderma), allergies (atopy), or an overactive immune system (lupus). Get it checked out by a vet as soon as you can so it does not develop into anything more serious.