

## Lick Granulomas

**Find out what veterinarian Leslie Sinclair, DVM recommends for identifying and treating lick granulomas.**

*Leslie Sinclair, DVM*

Q. How do I know if my dog has a lick granuloma?

Leslie Sinclair, DVM, says: A lick granuloma is an area of skin that a dog has licked long enough to cause a large, open ulcer. Most occur on the top of the front or rear paws, although they can occur anywhere the dog can lick. Lick granulomas have both medical and behavioral causes. There is often a real medical reason, such as a wound, a bug bite, or an allergy, for the dog to begin licking a particular spot. But as the dog begins to lick the wound, it begins to become even more sensitive, causing her to pay even more attention to it. Soon, the licking creates an ulcer. Veterinarians treat lick granulomas by many different methods. Some use bandages, while others use corticosteroid drugs and other anti-inflammatories to decrease the irritation. An Elizabethan collar prevents a dog from licking a wound until it heals, but once the collar is removed, the dog often goes back to work on the spot.

Often the most successful treatment is addressing the dogs behavioral needs. Lick granulomas can be a bored dogs cry for help. Offering another activity, such as playing with a chew toy, often resolves the problem. I recommend that dogs with lick granulomas be given plenty of exercise; avoid high-protein, high-energy diets; and receive plenty of chew toys to occupy their time. Antianxiety medication also can increase the chance of successfully healing a lick granuloma, and antibiotic therapy speeds healing of the wound.

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