

How can Dechra help?

Dechra offers many products that can manage your pet's itch. Once your veterinarian determines the cause, he/she will recommend the appropriate products to use. It's important to follow these recommendations to ensure the best outcome for your pet. And call your veterinarian if you have any questions or concerns.

Your veterinarian may recommend:

- ☐ Topical therapy (shampoo, spray, wipes, mousse)
- ☐ Supplements (EFAs, PEA)
- ☐ Anti-infectives
- ☐ Immunosuppressive therapy
- ☐ Hypoallergenic diets and treats

Track the Itch

ITCH RATING: 1 (LOW) TO 5 (HIGH)					
	1	2	3	4	5
WEEK 0					
WEEK 2					
WEEK 4					
WEEK 6					
WEEK 8					
WEEK 10					
WEEK 12					

Follow-up care

1. Treatment recommended for your pet is: _____

2. Notify the veterinarian if: _____

3. Recheck date: _____

Let your veterinarian know if you are having difficulty with treatment. There are many options to help your pet and they can tailor a plan to best fit your pet's needs.



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Itching in your dog can be manifested as biting, scratching, chewing, rubbing, rolling, or licking.

So that leads to the important question of

Why does my dog itch?



Why does my dog itch?

The answer is complicated. Different disease processes elicit different immunologic responses in the skin that make dogs want to scratch. Many diseases also create itch through multiple pathways. So there is never one answer for every itchy problem. Your veterinarian will use your pet's history, physical examination findings, and diagnostic testing results to determine the major sources of the itch. Once a primary diagnosis is made, secondary triggers may be identified. Both the primary and secondary problems must be corrected to control the itch. Some of these conditions may be easily managed, while some may be chronic and require long-term management with multimodal therapy.

So let's talk about the causes of itch in a dog. The most common causes are allergies (environmental, food, or fleas), infections (bacteria and yeast), and parasites.

Common areas for itch



As a result of chewing, licking, rubbing, and scratching, the skin becomes damaged, inflamed, and prone to secondary infections with bacteria and yeast. In chronic disease, hair loss occurs and the skin often becomes thickened, scaly, and black. The hair coat may feel greasy and be odorous.



Photo courtesy of Rusty Muse, DVM, DACVD

Allergic dermatitis

Allergic dermatitis is caused by a reaction to environmental triggers such as:

- Environmental pollens from grass, weed, tree, and mold spores
- Insects
- House dust mites

Most dogs develop atopic dermatitis as young adults between 1 and 3 years of age.

Food allergy

An immunologic reaction to a dietary substance: In most cases, a protein, is the culprit such as:

- Chicken
- Beef
- Lamb
- Fish

However, any carbohydrate, fat, or dietary supplement may contain an allergen. Food allergy can occur at any age, in any breed or gender, and pets may react to one, two or several substances.

Most food allergic pets itch continuously. They will scratch, chew, lick, or rub their skin often near the: head, ears, underarms, groin and paws.

Flea allergy

It may seem confusing but your pet might have a flea allergy even when you never see fleas. Flea allergy dermatitis results from a true hypersensitivity to flea bites, not damage from heavy flea infestations. Because flea-allergic animals spend so much time chewing and grooming, they often remove fleas before you see them. Once a flea has bitten your pet, the itch can last 14 days.

When the flea bites your pet, a small amount of saliva is injected into the skin. Dogs and cats develop an allergy to components of the flea's saliva, which can result in severe itching and bacterial skin infections. Dogs tend to show hair loss, skin thickening, and redness over the rump, inner and outer thighs, and the tail-head area.

Bacterial infections

Bacterial infections also cause your pet to itch. The skin, especially the abdomen, may show:

- Papules (red bumps)
- Pustules (pimples)
- Crusting
- Scaling

The most common cause in dogs is the bacterium *Staphylococcus pseudintermedius*.

Yeast infections

Yeast infections in the skin of dogs are most commonly caused by the yeast *Malassezia pachydermatis*. This is an organism that normally inhabits the skin and the ear canal of the dog without causing a problem. However, the organism may overgrow and cause significant skin and ear disease, discomfort, and itch.

Dogs that develop a yeast infection can present with different clinical signs, usually any combination of:

- Ear infections
- Hair loss
- Redness
- Skin darkening
- Thickening
- Flakiness
- Greasiness
- Skin odor

