



## What is a Hot Spot?

Hot spots go by many names....acute moist dermatitis, pyotraumatic dermatitis, superficial canine pyoderma, but they all refer to the same annoying patch of red, itchy, and oozy skin. Hot spots are extremely itchy, irritating, and painful to pets (yes, cats can get them too), with some pets being more prone to them than others.

### What causes hot spots?

An irritant causes an intense itch, which then causes the pet to chew and lick at the spot. The spot becomes inflamed, infected, and 'oozy' as bacteria thrive in the warm moist environment. (The image, courtesy of [www.theinternetpetvet.com](http://www.theinternetpetvet.com), shows the red irritated hot spot surrounded by wet fur from licking and chewing on the spot. The skin is also shiny and moist looking from saliva and infection).



### What are irritants that cause hot spots?

Determining the cause of irritation is key to controlling outbreaks. Irritants include seasonal allergies, food allergies, bug bites, fleas, poor grooming, swimming in dirty bodies of water, mange, certain hormonal diseases. Dogs with long and/or thick coats (Coated German Shepherds, Chow Chows, etc) may be more prone, but any breed is susceptible.

### How is it treated?

- The area of concern should be shaved down to the skin to let the area dry out.
- A mild detergent, usually diluted, should be used to thoroughly clean the area. Detergents often used are chlorhexidine, betadine, and/or dawn dish soap. Make sure the detergent is washed off after applying.
- Sometimes an ointment may be prescribed by your veterinarian to decrease the itch and irritation.
- Your vet may also prescribe an antibiotic, antihistamine, and/or pain medication for severe infections.





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- For chronic or recurring cases injections of a long-acting steroid may also be done to relieve the itch and inflammation.
- E-collars will allow the area to heal properly.

### **Can it be prevented?**

Unfortunately hot spots can pop up very quickly and it's hard to catch them before they get really bad. You can however take steps to try and avoid them from flaring up. Some tips for prevention:

- Flea prevention and control
  - Also take into consideration that some topical flea/tick preventions can also irritate the skin of some animals
- Proper grooming. Regular brushing helps control the undercoat which can prevent moisture build-up
  - When bathing your pet make sure that the coat is brushed out well to prevent matting and that all of the soap is rinsed off
- Allergy testing to determine if its food or environmental allergens

Other notes:

- Stores do sell "Hot Spot" remedies. Make sure you read the ingredients. Things such as tea tree and apple cider vinegar are great for drying out moisture build-up and relieving some of the itch but can be very painful in open wounds.
- Cooled moistened chamomile tea bags and aloe vera are good soothing options for home remedies, but if the spot gets bigger or doesn't go away please seek veterinary assistance.

<http://www.pethealthnetwork.com/dog-health/dog-diseases-conditions-a-z/hot-spots-dogs>