

DERMATOLOGY DIGITAL TOOLKIT



Your go-to source for relevant, client-friendly communications about skin and coat care.

MARCH 2018



Social Media Posts

Instructions: Copy and paste the desired posts on your clinic's Facebook, Twitter or Instagram pages. Follow any additional steps as instructed.

- Most shampoos formulated for dogs don't have much lather. Don't be alarmed if there aren't a lot of suds in the tub, it's still working!



[Note: The full-size image can be found in the "Social_Images" folder.]

- Putting a towel or rubber mat down in the bottom of the bath or sink while bathing your pet will help create a non-stick surface for safer baths.



[Note: The full-size image can be found in the "Social_Images" folder.]

- How often should you bathe fluffy? Most dogs and cats only need baths about once a month.



[Note: The full-size image can be found in the "Social_Images" folder.]

- Unlike people, pets do best with lukewarm water. Water that is too hot will be very uncomfortable to your pet. Make bath time easier by keeping the temperature down!



[Note: The full-size image can be found in the "Social_Images" folder.]

Social Media Posts (continued)

- Did you know? Skin problems are one of the top reasons for veterinarian visits. Fortunately, there are a wide range of treatment options. Your veterinarian can help choose the best treatment for you and your dog.



[Note: The full-size image can be found in the "Social_Images" folder.]

- Make bath time fun! Bring toys in the tub and keep some treats nearby.



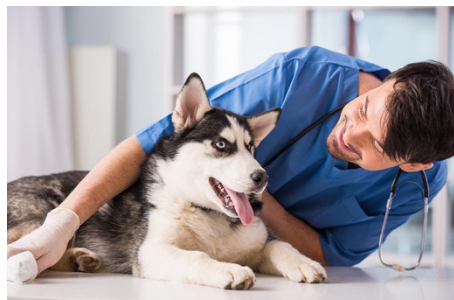
[Note: The full-size image can be found in the "Social_Images" folder.]

- Be on the lookout for signs of itching, dry skin, red spots, hair loss and oily skin which can all be signs of a dermatological problem. The good news is that in most cases these issues can be fixed! Visit your veterinarian for a comprehensive treatment plan.



[Note: The full-size image can be found in the "Social_Images" folder.]

- Did you know? Skin and coat disorders can be a sign of intestinal problems and food allergies. This is why it is important to bring you pet to the vet if you notice anything amiss.



[Note: The full-size image can be found in the "Social_Images" folder.]

Social Media Posts (continued)

- Your pet's skin has a lot of important functions: it regulates temperature and hydration and acts as a barrier to bacteria and fungi. Make sure to keep your pet's skin in its best shape with routine baths and annual veterinarian visits.



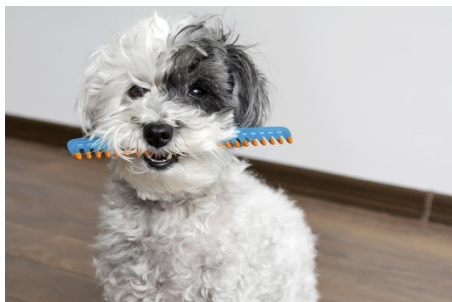
[Note: The full-size image can be found in the "Social_Images" folder.]

- Itchy skin is very common in dogs and cats. Not only is it uncomfortable, excessive scratching can lead to additional skin lesions and infections. You can treat itchy skin with easy to use medicated shampoos from your vet clinic.



[Note: The full-size image can be found in the "Social_Images" folder.]

- Don't forget to brush your dog before bath time! Trust us, it will be much easier and more effective then after his coat is wet.



[Note: The full-size image can be found in the "Social_Images" folder.]

- The noise of a hair dryer can be too loud and scary for many sensitive ears. Air drying may take longer but your pet will thank you.



[Note: The full-size image can be found in the "Social_Images" folder.]

Social Media Posts (continued)

- Make sure to use a shampoo specifically formulated for pets. Human skin is different from your pet's, and human shampoo can be irritating or cause your pet's skin balance to be off. You can find a variety of pet shampoos and conditioners at your veterinarian's clinic.



[Note: The full-size image can be found in the "Social_Images" folder.]

- Did you know that routine bathing can help alleviate environmental allergies in your pet? Just another reason to lather up!



[Note: The full-size image can be found in the "Social_Images" folder.]

- Skin infections are one of the most common reasons for visits to the vets, so chances are good that your best friend will get one at some point. Schedule an appointment if you see anything amiss such as hair loss, red or irritated skin, oily coat, or excessive itching.



[Note: The full-size image can be found in the "Social_Images" folder.]

Articles

Instructions: Use the following content on your clinic's website, blog or within a newsletter. Associated images are located in the "Article_Images" folder.

Beyond the Stink: The Medical Benefits of Bathing

All pets can benefit from a bath as part of their routine maintenance grooming, as it will help to remove dirt, excessive oils and smells. The frequency may vary based on the individual, but once per month is a good starting point for most dogs and this can be increased when your furry friend finds something dirty or smelly to get into. Your pet may require more frequent bathing based on their individual circumstances, such as their coat type, the amount of oil produced by their skin, any underlying conditions (allergies for example), and the types of activities they participate in (frequent swimming in a pond/lake, areas with ticks in the environment, etc.). Cats are less likely to need regular bathing, but may still benefit from an occasional bath depending on their individual circumstances. Here are some medical reasons your pet may require a regular bath:



Allergies

Animals with allergies to environmental substances such as grasses, pollens, molds, and mildews can benefit greatly from a consistent bathing routine. Just the simple act of bathing with a quality shampoo can help to physically remove environmental allergens from the skin surface before they get a chance to begin to cause inflammation and itchiness. For routine bathing purposes, without a secondary issue such as a skin infection, a general use shampoo such as Aloe and Oatmeal Shampoo is a nice option that offers a gentle soap free shampoo that lathers well and smells very pleasant. Additional benefit can be obtained in pets who have dry skin or allergies, by using Aloe and Oatmeal Conditioner following the shampoo. This will help lend extra moisture to the skin, which can aid in improving the epidermal barrier. Think of this epidermal layer of the skin as a shield against the outside world. Dryness, trauma, and chronic inflammation from allergies represent cracks in this protective shield, which in turn can lead to more itchiness, allow allergens to absorb more easily, and potentially allow for a bacterial or yeast infection to get started.

Skin Conditions

If your pet has an underlying medical issue, they can benefit from one of the medicated shampoo options. Your veterinarian is a wealth of knowledge and can help decide which product may be right for your pet's particular skin condition. Shampoos, conditioners, sprays, and dips are available that help combat bacterial infections, yeast infections, itchiness, ringworm, mites that cause mange, scaling and crusting disorders.

Skin Infections

Skin infections are one of the most common reasons that our pets visit the veterinary hospital and medicated shampoo treatments are an extremely important part of this treatment plan. Once a diagnosis is made, your veterinarian will most likely prescribe an oral antibiotic or antifungal medication, depending on the type of infection. Using a topical treatment in addition to the oral medication is an important adjunctive treatment that allows us to treat the condition using multi-modal therapy. This can help to completely clear the infection quicker and more effectively.

There are a number of options available to suit your pets' needs, whether they need a routine use shampoo and conditioner or a medicated treatment option. No matter what the situation is, we have a helpful solution to their problem. Your veterinarian is a wealth of knowledge and will be able to help you determine the best treatment plan for your pet's individual needs.

Articles (continued)

Proper Steps for Bathing Your Pet

Routine bathing can be an important part of your pet's dermatologic health, not to mention they will smell more pleasant and feel softer as a result! Beyond routine bathing, a medicated shampoo therapy is indicated if there is an underlying skin condition such as a skin infection.

How to Bathe Your Pet:

- 1) **Choose a location** that is easiest to efficiently bathe your pet. This may need to be a bathtub to keep your pet confined, or giving the bath outside may prove to be the easiest location for you provided the weather is right and you can restrain them properly while giving the bath.
- 2) **Thoroughly wet your pet** with clean, lukewarm water.
- 3) **Liberal apply the shampoo and lather it up** while massaging your pet.
 - a. Be sure to apply the shampoo everywhere that you need it. This is particularly important for medicated shampoos so that the treatment is fully effective in the areas it is most needed. Key areas to remember include the pockets where the legs meet the body, skin folds, between the toes, underneath the tail, etc.
 - b. For medicated shampoos, you must allow a minimum of 5-10 minutes of contact time for the product to achieve its full therapeutic benefit. This means you should apply a medicated product everywhere 1st and then start the clock.
- 4) Once properly applied and minimum contact time has been met, **rinse the product off thoroughly and completely**, so there is no product left on your pet's skin/coat.
- 5) **If additional moisturization is desired, a conditioner can be used** after the shampoo process is complete.



Try to make bath time an enjoyable time! Some pets really enjoy a bath and a massage, while bath time may be lower on the list of favorite things to do for others. Incorporating small pieces of their favorite treats can help to keep them distracted and make the bathing process more enjoyable for everyone involved. It can be useful to have an extra person who is dedicated to rapidly and nearly continuously providing very small pieces of treats to the pet. It may be helpful to time the bath around a time when the pet is hungry to make this technique even more successful.

If your pet is in need of medicated shampoo therapy or even just a routine bath shampoo, please consult with your veterinarian for a treatment plan tailored to your individual pet!

Articles (continued)

Pets Can Have Allergies, Too!

How Environmental Allergies Can Affect Your Dog or Cat

Allergies are one of the top reasons that dogs and cats end up going to see their veterinarian. Some of the most commonly diagnosed allergens are environmental and include pollens (grass, tree, or weed), mold spores, mildews, and dust mites.

When trying to diagnose the problem, it is important to make sure that other conditions are not the main cause or at least contributing concurrently to your pet's symptoms. Other medical issues can cause similar symptoms as allergens and it is important to make the correct diagnosis. Your veterinarian's experience can help them rule out other conditions that can cause the same types of symptoms as environmental allergies. A good timeline and history of when the signs first started, the seasons when your pet tends to exhibit these signs each year, when the signs are at their absolute worst, etc. can assist your veterinarian tremendously in making a proper diagnosis. In addition to the detailed history that you can provide to your veterinarian, a physical exam and some basic tests (skin cytology, skin scrapings, etc.) are necessary to rule out other potential causes of your pet's symptoms.



Once there is a strong suspicion that environmental allergies are the main cause of the symptoms, the gold standard for diagnosing patients with environmental allergies is to do an allergy test – an intradermal skin test is typically preferred, but a blood test for environmental allergies is an alternative option. This testing will help identify which specific substances your pet is allergic to. From here, the most recommended treatment is giving hyposensitization injections or “allergy shots”. These shots are typically given once weekly with the concentration gradually increased over time. These injections can decrease the body's inflammatory response to the allergens, which means less inflammation, less itchiness, and a better quality of life.

Beyond hyposensitization allergy injections, there are other medications that can be of benefit for allergic patients. It is important to differentiate that allergy shots go directly to the root of the problem, while some of these other options may only help to temporarily alleviate the signs and symptoms associated with the underlying allergies. Nonetheless, these other treatments can play an important role when used periodically in conjunction with allergy shots or if allergy shots are not pursued:

- Fish oil supplementation (Omega-3 fatty acids, which is safe to use long term)
- Regular bathing (maintenance shampoo or a medicated shampoo if secondary problems such as skin infection are present)
- Antihistamines
- Steroids
- Other itch/inflammation blocking medications prescribed by your veterinarian

Environmental allergies are a common problem. Your veterinarian is a wealth of information and they can help you determine the best way to deal with your pet's individual situation. If you have a pet exhibiting frequent skin issues, ear issues, itchiness, etc. then a consultation with your veterinarian is important to discuss these issues. If necessary, your veterinarian can refer you to a board certified Veterinary Dermatologist for further evaluation.