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NORTH QUEENSLAND SPECIALIST EQUINE SERVICE

Itchy Pets



Living with an itchy pet can be very frustrating and distressing to both you and your pet. Itchiness will cause your cat or dog to excessively scratch, chew or lick their body which can result in self harm allowing wounds and infections .. There are many reasons why pets itch but the two most common causes are:

- **External Parasites**
- or
- **Allergies**

External Parasites:

Fleas, Ticks, Mozzies and Skin Mites. These can cause extreme itching in your pets and need to be ruled out first, before we look into any other cause of itching.

Fleas are not only an irritation but in some cases, some pets are allergic to them – these cats and dogs are intensely allergic to the flea's saliva and even one bite from a flea can cause a great deal of distress. In a severely flea allergic pet it has been shown that the bite of one flea can cause an intense allergic reaction that may cause pruritis (itchiness) for up to 2 weeks. We always recommend stepped-up flea control and monitoring for fleas, as flea infestation can also make worse other allergies. **So come in speak to one of our receptionists / nurses for assistance.**

Mozzies are a regular part of life in North Queensland. Some cats and dogs are uniquely allergic to their bite. In cats this tends to be itchiness on the nose, paws, around the ears and sometimes other body parts. Dogs are also most affected on the ears and the bridge of the nose. The severe itching causes these pets to self harm and cause nasty weeping sores.

Ticks in the Townsville region tend to be the brown dog tick, kangaroo tick or cattle tick. It is less common for us to see the paralysis tick. The natural host of the paralysis tick is the bandicoot and its natural habitat is more wooded hills and mountains. All other ticks will cause localised skin irritation, blood loss (anaemia) and can pass blood borne diseases between dogs. There are some very high quality oral tick treatment and prevention products available. **So come in speak to one of our friendly receptionists / nurses for assistance.**

Skin mites in dogs are usually referred to as Mange. Mange can be caused by Sarcoptes or demadec, both mites that need to be identified by skin scrapings. It is very treatable. **Make a time to come in and have this checked if you are concerned.**

Allergies:

Fleas - As discussed earlier, an allergy to fleas is a common skin condition in dogs and cats. You may not see fleas, but that doesn't mean they aren't there. Fleas only spend 5% of their life-cycle on your pet and the rest of the time is spent in the environment. For the flea allergic pet, consistent year-round flea control is essential for not only for the patient but for all pets in the household, combined with environmental control.

Food Allergies - Allergies to different foods can cause dogs to be itchy and have skin rashes. Food allergies are most commonly caused by one specific protein or carbohydrate source in the pet's food, such as beef, chicken, lamb, wheat or soy. The diagnosis of a food allergy can be quite complex but we will usually recommend a diet called an elimination diet, that contains only ingredients that the dog has never eaten before. This often requires a prescription diet that is specifically manufactured to be free from any of the most common protein or carbohydrate sources. The diagnosis of a food allergy requires careful monitoring of your dog by **both you and your vet so please make an appointment** with us if you suspect your dog may have an allergy to a food source.

Contact Allergies - Dogs may have contact allergies to vegetation e.g. grass, plants, plastic and other materials (leads/ collars/ food bowls) and even house hold products e.g. carpet cleaners, washing detergent. This sort of allergy is often more pronounced in the contact areas but can affect the whole body.

Atopic Dermatitis - This condition affects pets that have allergic skin reactions to many common substances such as pollens, grasses, house dust mites or mould spores. Contact allergy when your pet breathes these allergens in but can be inflicted with skin pruritis. Most dogs will start to show signs as young adults – between one and three years of age. There can be seasonality to the itchiness too, triggered by plants and pollen. The most common sign is itching, often involving the muzzle, around the eyes, ears, armpits, belly and paws. It can also appear as chronic ear problems, and inflammation around the anus. As a result of excessive scratching, your pet can get bacterial or yeast infections or have recurrent ear infections. Diagnosis of Atopic Dermatitis requires a thorough examination by your vet and can sometimes require specialist testing.



TRADING HOURS:

Monday to Friday

8.00am to 6.00pm

Saturday

8.00am to 5.00pm



EMAIL: vet@townsvillevetclinic.com.au

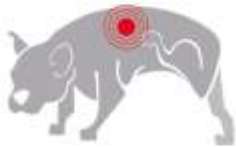
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FACT

Seasonal allergies can result in ear infections.

2



FACT

Seasonal allergies are a major cause of skin reactions.

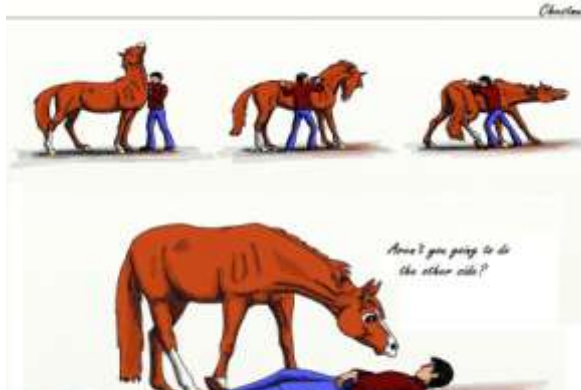
March
10% OFF
 Specialised Skin Dietary Foods
 and non prescription
 Skin Care Products

3



FACT

Itchy paws can be the sign of an allergy; maybe to the same pollen you're allergic to.



Horse Skin Conditions

Like our smaller furry friends, horses too suffer from a myriad of skin diseases and disorders – especially in environments like ours where extreme sun exposure and tropical weather cycles result in a high case load of skin complaints in our equine patients. Here is a summary of the causes of some of the most common skin diseases seen in horses in North QLD and how we at TVC go about treating them.

Lumps and Bumps:

One of the most common skin diseases to affect horses is **Sarcoids**: A tumour of the skin that has multiple different appearances; from a flat, hairless area through to nodular lumps and even large ulcerated masses. Sarcoids can be difficult to treat and have a high rate of reoccurrence if not treated promptly and correctly so don't hesitate in organising an appointment with one of our TVC Vets. Although generally not a malignant tumour, they can be locally invasive and may grow to affect adjacent structures. We recommend prompt Veterinary treatment as the sooner they can be treated, the lower the chance of re-occurrence.



The skin cancer most commonly affecting horses is a **Squamous Cell Carcinoma**. These often occur around sensitive areas such as the eye. Treatment is by surgical excision or chemotherapy. It is important to protect the horse from excessive solar exposure by using shade cloth fly veils and specially formulated sun barrier creams.



Swamp cancer is another skin issue that we see on a regular basis at Townsville Vet Clinic. Lesions look like big infected oozing masses of proud flesh. These granulomatous masses begin as a wound or cut that gets contaminated by water borne moulds or fungi. Horses find them quite itchy and they tend to grow quite fast. These need prompt treatment before they invade vital structures, don't hesitate in organising an appointment with one of our TVC Vets. Treatment most often involves surgical excision.

Warts are often found on young horses, particularly around the nose and muzzle. In most cases these warts will resolve without any particular treatment. Warts of the ears can be a little more stubborn and don't tend to regress by themselves.

Fungal/Bacterial Skin Diseases:

Fungi and Bacteria love North QLD. They enjoy warm, humid environments and some of the more common bacterial and fungal skin conditions are:

Rain Scald a bacterial skin infection most often affecting the back, rump and cannons of horses. The hair clumps together and the skin becomes greasy and flaky. Treatment involves antibacterial shampoos and in severe cases antibiotic therapy may be indicated.

Greasy heal is a similar condition occurring at the back of the pastern. Deep infection of the skin in this area can result in lameness and further complications.

Ringworm occurs in horses most commonly on the neck and shoulders. Contagious between in contact horses and humans! Can usually be treated with an antifungal wash.



In the wetter months of the year biting insects can cause significant stress to our horses – particularly to those horses which have an allergic type response to midges. This is known as **Queensland itch**. Affected horses develop intensely itchy, hairless, scaly areas over the mane, withers and tail heal. Protecting horses from biting insects with insecticidal sprays is important to control QLD itch.

Living in the tropics most certainly has its benefits but when it comes to skin conditions in our horses, the tropics have a lot to answer for! Remember your antibacterial/antifungal shampoo, your animal safe sun protecting creams and an effective and safe insecticide. Drop by to have a chat to one of our Equine Veterinarians about the best products to protect **your** horse's skin.