



## Dermatology Services

**A guide to skin problems in your pet.**



## Dermatology at Busselton Vet Hospital

Dermatology is a passion for us at Busselton Veterinary Hospital, and an area of medicine we spend a lot of time working on. With years of clinical experience and Vets with postgraduate studies we can offer a professional and up to the minute service in our accredited *hospital of excellence*.

### A common problem...

Itchy dogs, lumpy cats, red skin, chewing paws, smelly ears... these are all uncomfortable problems for your pets that we love to see—because we can help! Itchy skin is a common problem that we see, but other signs might be a rash, scaly skin, recurrent ear infections, or even other signs of illness such as diarrhoea, conjunctivitis or weight gain and excessive drinking. If your pet has a particular skin problem you can ask to see Dr Belinda Cussons, who has a special interest and has done further training in Dermatology to treat these problematic skin diseases. Otherwise any of our well trained Vets can assess and start a treatment course. It doesn't matter whether the problem has been there for three days or three years... we can help improve your pet's comfort and skin disease.



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## Testing and Diagnosis

Achieving an accurate diagnosis is central to our philosophy and allows for tailor made treatment for your pet. We utilise an extensive range of tests and some that may be performed on your pet include:

- A full physical examination
- Urinalysis
- Coat brushings
- Skin scrapings
- Microscopic hair examination (trichogram)
- Microscopic skin sample examination (cytology)
- Fungal infection examination (Wood's lamp)
- Culture for bacteria or fungal infection
- Skin biopsy
- Food elimination trial
- Allergy testing (blood test)



## Treatments

Once testing has been completed, we will formulate a **treatment plan** for your pet. This involves an initial course of treatment to resolve the problem, and is generally followed by a **management plan**. This two stage process allows us to achieve a good result in treating the problem, but also reducing the chance of it reoccurring.

Our aim is to reduce the uncomfortable symptoms your pet is experiencing, and at the same time to minimise any side effects from medications. This may involve the regular use of a range of tablet medications (*antibiotics, antiinflammatories and antihistamines*) depending on your pet's diagnosis. We also utilise a range of *creams, ointments and sprays* which are well tolerated by pets and have minimal side effects. *Medicated shampoos* also play an important part in treating many conditions we see in the hospital.



Dietary supplements may be prescribed, such as *essential fatty acids* (which can be found in fish oils) to decrease inflammation and improve the barrier function of your pet's skin.

## Allergy Testing

Pets commonly develop allergies to environmental allergens, such as grasses, pollens, insects, mold and dust mites. Animals are often affected in middle age, and commonly have itchy skin and ear problems. We can take a simple blood sample to test for over 90 different allergens and determine what your pet might be allergic to. A 'vaccine' can then be created specifically for your pet to desensitise them to the allergen and reduce their allergic symptoms.

### Food allergies

There is no specific test to diagnose a food allergy, so if your dog is showing signs of a food allergy we will recommend an *elimination diet trial*. This means feeding a special strict diet that contains ingredients they have never eaten before. We may suggest feeding a prescription diet for at least 8 weeks to help diagnose a food allergy.



## Fleas and other nasties...

Fleas play a major role in the development of many skin conditions we see in our clinic. Many animals are allergic to the saliva of a biting flea and may have a severe reaction, even if there aren't any fleas to be seen on your pet. As part of our approach to managing skin disease we will ensure your pet is receiving the correct type of flea, heartworm, intestinal worm and mite prevention. There are many



different products available so we will help you to find the best combination for your pet to stay healthy.



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