Hair Loss in the Dog

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Senior Edition

Dogs 8+ Years Old

THE SENIOR DOG IS ITCHY

1 The hair loss pattern is follicular centric

Demodex canis - Uncommon in senior dogs

- Variable pruritus and hair loss
- Annular to ovoid areas of scale, comedones, or crusting
- Paws may be diffusely affected

- Diagnosed by trichogram or skin scraping
- Treatment with Isoxazolines, Ivermectin, Moxidectin
- 40% - 50% of senior onset patients may have underlying endocrinopathy, immunomodulatory drug use, or neoplasia

Dermatophytosis - Rare in senior dogs

- Typically annular to ovoid macules of hair loss with variable scale and crust
- Minimally to mildly itchy in most patients

- Diagnose with Woods Lamp, DTM, or PCR
- Treat with topical and oral therapy

Pyoderma - Common

1 Staphylococcal folliculitis - papules, pustules, crusts, and epidermal collarettes on haired skin (Pyoderma is common in patients with allergy)

2 Canine chin 'acne' - typically face and chin - papules, pustules, and furuncles

- Diagnose by skin cytology
- Treat with topical and oral anti-bacterial therapy (Pyoderma is common in patients with allergy)

2 Pododermatitis only

Allergy

- Environmental allergy is common in senior dogs. Typical age of onset is 1-3 years of age. May be seasonal or non-seasonal

- Diagnosis by excluding similar appearing conditions

- First onset of a food allergy is less common in a senior dog

- Diagnosed by a strict 8-12 week food trial

3 There is no hair loss

Flea allergy - Common

- Dorsum, inguinal area
- Live fleas or flea dirt can typically be demonstrated with flea combing of affected areas

- If there is any chance of flea allergy - treat for it
- Isozazolines or Spinosad are recommended

Vasculitis - Uncommon to rare in senior dogs

- Can occur secondary to vaccination or can be idiopathic
- May appear as erythema, erosion, scale to crust OR as hypopigmentation, erosion, and fibrosis

- Biopsy to confirm diagnosis

Pemphigus foliaceus - Uncommon in senior dogs

- Variable level of pruritus
- Larger pustules spanning multiple hair follicles
- Haired and non-haired skin can be affected

- Biopsy to confirm diagnosis

Cutaneous lymphoma - Uncommon to rare in senior dogs

- May or may not be pruritic
- May present as erythema, white scale, hypopigmentation or erythema of mucus membranes, or nodules

- Biopsy to confirm diagnosis

4 There is hair loss but it is not follicular centric

Malassezia dermatitis - Common in senior dogs

- Variable pruritus
- Secondary to other inflammatory skin diseases - *Demodex* and allergy most common
- Rarely present in hound-type dogs without proven underlying disease

Other ectoparasites - Uncommon in senior dogs

- *Cheyletiella*
- *Sarcoptes*
- Lice

- Use superficial skin scrapings or tape impression for diagnosis
- Treat if any chance of atypical ectoparasites
- Treatment - Consider topical Selamectin or Isoxazolines

CA-0012 12/20

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