



SEBORRHEA IN DOGS

Seborrhea is a skin disorder that results in the sebaceous glands in the skin overproducing sebum which causes flaky, scaly, itchy, red skin. There are two different types: primary and secondary, with the latter being the more common. The seborrhea may be dry and flaky or oily and greasy.

Primary Seborrhea

This type of seborrhea is usually genetically influenced and is most common in certain dog breeds such as Cocker Spaniels, West Highland Terriers, and Basset Hounds. They are usually diagnosed at a young age and as they mature, the condition worsens.

Secondary Seborrhea

This type of seborrhea is the more common type and there are numerous potential underlying causes including allergies, hormonal imbalances (hypothyroidism or Cushing's), parasites, skin infections (bacterial or yeast), nutritional, environmental factors (temperature/humidity), etc.

Diagnosis

Testing that can aid in diagnosis of a seborrhea diagnosis include baseline bloodwork, skin scrapings or culturing, and potentially a skin biopsy. In some cases, signalment (age, breed, sex), history, and clinical presentation may clue in to the most likely primary cause (i.e. if very itchy, most likely allergies or skin parasites are the primary cause).

Treatment

One of the most important parts of initial therapy in secondary seborrhea cases is **treatment for the primary cause**, such as allergies, skin infection, parasites, hypothyroidism, etc. This is why diagnostics are important to pursue.

If no underlying cause can be found or if we are dealing with a primary seborrhea case, there are several treatments that can be pursued.

1. **Frequent bathing (2-3 times per week, maintenance 1-2 times per week)** is one of the mainstays of therapy with either keratolytic or keratoplastic products. In some cases, the scaling can worsen before it gets better.
 - a. Examples of shampoos typically recommended: Dechra DermaBenSs Shampoo, Douxo S3 SEB Odor-Control Seboregulating Shampoo, Vetoquinol BPO-3 Shampoo, or Virbac Keratolux Shampoo, etc.
 - b. If a bacterial or yeast component is identified, an antibacterial or antifungal based shampoo may be instituted instead or in addition.
2. **Topical mousses or emollients** can also be recommended to decrease transepidermal water loss and are usually used in addition or after shampooing.
 - a. Examples include Dechra Atopivet Mousse or Spot-On, Dermoscent Essential-6 Spot on, Douxo S3 SEB Mousse, etc.
3. **Omega-3 fatty acid supplementation** can also be added to aid in repair of the damaged skin barrier. In some cases, a food change may be recommended to a food that includes a higher omega-3 fatty acid base, especially for some allergy cases.
4. **Vitamin A supplementation** (8,000-10,000 units/dog by mouth every 12 hours)
5. If topical treatment alone is not improving the condition, some other less common treatments may include oral retinoids or immunosuppressants such as Atopica (cyclosporine).

Resources

<https://vcahospitals.com/know-your-pet/seborrhea-in-dogs>
https://www.merckvetmanual.com/integumentary-system/seborrhea/seborrhea-in-animals#Treatment_v3281866
<https://www.vin.com/apputil/content/defaultadv1.aspx?pld=8768&catId=18812&id=3850098>