

## HOT SPOTS

Many pets in the summer suffer from what is called “hot spots”. They usually result when the dog licks and chews himself due to allergies to food, fleas or pollen. A hot spot usually starts out as a small red area the size of a dime and quickly spreads to become a huge, oozing sore the size of your hand. At this point you usually have a secondary bacterial infection due to the damage that the dog has done to the skin.

Hot spots should receive immediate attention as they can be very painful to the pet. Also everything should be done to control or eliminate the underlying cause of the hot spot. Usually veterinarians prescribe cortisone to stop the itch-chew-scratch cycle and antibiotics to control the infection. Check first before applying any topical spray as many contain alcohol, lidocaine or other chemical ingredients that can cause further damage to the pet’s skin.

Many people prefer to use a more natural ingredient such as Aloe Vera, chamomile tea or tree oil which promotes natural healing and reduces pain and inflammation.

If hot spots are caused by fleas then all precautions should be taken to eliminate the fleas. If they are caused by an environmental allergy then your pet should be treated by a veterinarian, dermatologist and hyposensitized with allergen injections if the vet recommends this. Many times just improving your pet’s diet and adding a food supplement will improve the coat and skin of the animal and make it less desirable for fleas.

So check the pet’s coat and skin frequently so small problems can be controlled before they become large ones.