

Skin Problems Explained

Family Matters

Skin problems are one of the most common reasons pets visit the vet.

An itchy dog.

A cat that's over-grooming.

Red skin.

Hair loss.

Scabs.

An unpleasant smell.

While these problems often look similar, they can have **very different causes**.

At Amity, we believe that healthy skin starts with an accurate diagnosis. Our purpose is to **Empower You Through Education**, helping you understand why skin problems occur and why finding the underlying cause is so important.

Skin Disease Is a Symptom

Many people think "my pet has a skin problem" is the diagnosis.

In reality, it's only the beginning.

Skin disease can be caused by:

- Allergies.
- Fleas and other parasites.
- Bacterial infections.
- Yeast infections.
- Ringworm and other fungal infections.
- Hormonal disorders.
- Autoimmune disease.
- Nutritional deficiencies.
- Skin tumours.

Many of these conditions look remarkably alike, but require completely different treatments.

What Signs Should I Look For?

Common signs include:

- Scratching.
- Licking or chewing.
- Hair loss.
- Red or inflamed skin.
- Scabs or sores.
- Bad odour.
- Greasy skin.
- Thickened skin.
- Recurrent ear infections.
- Changes in coat quality.

The important question isn't simply **"What does the skin look like?"**

It's **"Why does it look like this?"**

Why Do We Recommend Skin Tests?

One of the biggest misconceptions is that your vet can diagnose most skin conditions just by looking.

Sometimes that's possible.

Often it isn't.

Simple tests performed during your consultation can provide invaluable information.

These may include:

- Skin cytology (examining skin cells under the microscope).
- Tape preparations.
- Hair plucks.
- Skin scrapes to look for mites.
- Flea combing.
- Occasionally fungal culture or biopsy.

These tests are usually quick, minimally invasive and help us choose the right treatment rather than simply guessing.

Why Not Just Give an Injection?

Many skin conditions improve temporarily with anti-inflammatory medication.

But if we don't identify the underlying cause, the problem often returns.

For example, treating an allergic dog with antibiotics won't control the allergy.

Likewise, treating a bacterial infection without addressing the underlying allergy means the infection is likely to recur.

Our goal is to solve the problem—not simply postpone it.

Skin Problems Are Often Long-Term

Some skin diseases, particularly allergies, cannot be cured.

They are **managed** over a lifetime.

This often involves regular monitoring, adjusting treatment as the seasons change and preventing flare-ups before they become severe.

Good management usually leads to a much happier pet than repeatedly treating infections after they've already developed.

Healthy Skin Means Better Quality of Life

Constant itching affects far more than the skin.

It affects sleep.

Comfort.

Mood.

Family life.

At Amity, we'll work with you to understand your pet's skin disease and develop a management plan tailored to their individual needs.

Because every pet deserves to feel comfortable in their own skin.

And every family deserves to see their pet relaxed, happy and itch-free.

Because they're not just your pet.

They're family.

Family Matters.

If you need more information, book an appointment with an Amity vet. We're here to Empower You Through Education and help you become your pet's greatest advocate.