



# 4 Paws Vet

## NEWSLETTER SPRING 2014

### Exciting Breakthrough in Weight Management!

Hills Pet Food company have launched a unique, innovative diet which will help your pet lose those hard to shift kilos! Hills Prescription Diet **Metabolic Advanced Weight Solution** contains a special blend of nutrients and ingredients that works to increase your pet's metabolism, therefore encouraging weight loss.

If you feel this might be the solution for your pet, why don't you book in for an appointment with one of our highly trained vet nurses to discuss your pet's dietary requirements? These special **weight management consultations** are **FREE**. Call us today on 9953 1264.

### Is your dog's itchiness driving you crazy?

Does your dog keep you awake at night with its annoying scratching? Have you noticed that your dog has a bad odour? If so, chances are it has an allergy or skin infection which is driving you both nuts.

Owning an itchy dog is one of the most common reasons for visiting your vet, particularly in spring and summer. Dogs can suffer from allergies and skin diseases, so it is important to have an understanding of the many causes of the "itchy dog syndrome."

To accurately diagnose and treat your dog, you will need to work closely with your vet, as many skin conditions require long term treatment. Constant monitoring of your dog's progress and feedback to your vet is vital, as

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is your commitment to managing and treating the condition.

To assist your vet to diagnose and then treat the itch, it is helpful to firstly provide some key information. For example:

- does your dog scratch its face, feet, ears, body or tail?
- does it chew its feet, rub its body along the walls of your house, or does it scoot along the ground?
- did you first notice the itch as a puppy, or did it develop later in life?
- does your dog scratch mostly in spring or summer, or is it all year round?
- is your dog confined to indoors, or does it run in the bush?
- do you have other pets?
- is a family member also itchy?
- which shampoos and flea control products do you use?
- what is your dog's basic diet?
- have you had success or failure with any previous treatments?

After careful examination of your dog, your vet may perform some pathology tests such as skin scrapings, samples of skin flakes, cytology on lumps or ears, skin biopsies, or a series of blood and urine tests.



Your vet will then be able to advise you of the one or more medical conditions responsible for causing your dog to scratch. The most common ones being the following:-

## 1. Allergies:

- The most common is flea allergy dermatitis, which is worst in the hotter months. The itch is mostly on the lower back, hind legs and tummy.
- Inhaled or atopic dermatitis which is most prevalent in spring and summer. Inhaled pollens, house dust mites or mould spores may cause an itch on any part of the body.
- Food allergies which often lead to tummy upsets and skin irritations. Food allergies are mostly triggered by animal protein in the food.
- Contact allergies are commonly caused by grasses and succulent weeds. The itch is often noticed on the feet, tummy and chin.

## 2. Infections:

- Staphylococcus bacteria frequently lead to pimples and hot spots. In the more severe cases deep seated pyoderma may develop.
- Fungal infections (Ringworm) which are uncommon in dogs lead to patches of hair loss.
- Malassezia yeast infections are often associated with dandruff and a rancid odour on a dog.
- Mange mites such as Demodex or Scabies will cause intense itch and hair loss.

## 3. Seborrhoea:

- an inflammatory skin condition that may result in dry or oily skin. The dogs are very itchy, lose hair, have a dry scale and are very smelly.

## 4. Hormonal or metabolic diseases:

- Hypothyroid (underactive thyroid) dogs often develop an itch, dry scaly skin, maybe overweight and infertile.
- Hyperadrenocorticism (Cushings disease) due to an excess of cortisol production frequently causes the dog to itch, lose hair, have thin skin with dark pigment, drink excessively and have recurring skin problems.

## 5. Cancers and immune mediated diseases:

- may lead to itchy skin, weight loss, infections, development of lumps or growths and other conditions.

Many of the conditions described above may appear similar on initial examination, however once a diagnosis has been made, your vet will develop a treatment protocol which may involve injections, tablets, medicated shampoos, rinses and in some cases very careful monitoring and repeat blood testing. The aim is to eliminate the itch and odour, restore the hair loss and return the hair coat on your dog to its shiny best. Please follow the directions of your vet carefully and report the progress regularly. Use shampoos and medications formulated specifically for the skin of dogs.

Itchy dogs can be frustrating at times but by being persistent with flea control and skin care and following your vet's advice, your dog will really appreciate your diligence - and - there will be no more thumping on the floor at night keeping you both awake!



## New grooming services

- We're now offering a new **'dental rinse' service**. A dental rinse doesn't replace a proper scale and polish your pet will receive at 4 Paws Vet, but it does instantly freshen breath. Regular use is proven to reduce plaque and smelly bacteria. Only \$5.
- **Walk and drop home service:** have your pet collected from the grooming room, walked for half an hour and delivered to your door for only \$25.

