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Hot spots & homeopathic remedies.

What are hotspots?

Acute moist dermatitis.

Hotspots are essentially an immune-mediated response of the skin.

They appear as red, moist, irritated, sometimes oozy skin lesions that can appear anywhere on your dog.

Hot spots also tend to appear suddenly, with no warning.

If they're untreated, they can also spread very fast.

So if you see one on your dog, it's important to get treating it right away.

Hotspots can be caused;

This is a question of watching your dog closely and thinking about what has happened recently in their life that might have caused the hotspot.

By an allergic reaction:

Eaten anything unusual food,

Environmental allergies like grasses, pollens or molds scummy pond water,

A bug or insect bites.

By matted coat matted where the skin underneath can't breathe
poor grooming

Underlying disease.

Caused by boredom or stress lack of exercise

Caused by a sore spot such as an achy hip or knee that the dog
consciously been licking or chewing

Flea allergy dermatitis can also cause hot spots. Hotspots do hurt and
will be painful.

They're not only painful, but they're stressful for your dog and they're
stressful for you too.

Preventing hotspots should be high up in your priorities when it comes
to your dog's care.

Do not uses antibiotic for your first try conventional treatments - this
should also be a high priority.

Using conventional medications such as antibiotics is not a good idea
and can even be harmful over the long term.

Skin conditions (such as hotspots) are never "just skin conditions."

They always have an underlying cause and the hotspot is nothing but a
symptom of that underlying disorder.

That's why it's important to address the **cause** of the hotspot ...
otherwise, it will just keep coming back.

Conventional medicines (even the topical sprays your vet might want
you to use) almost always **work by suppressing the symptoms** (in this
case, the hotspot).

That's why so many conventional medicines are called anti ... there are
antifungals, anti-inflammatories and in this case, antibiotics.

All work to treat the signs of the disease but do nothing to treat the dog
to make sure he doesn't get sick again.

Here's the ironic part ... the antibiotic spray you might use on that hotspot will actually make your dog more likely to get more skin infections and hot spots.

In humans, topical antibiotics have "emerged as the leading cause of skin and soft tissue infections in the community" according to [Dr Henry Blumberg](#), a professor of infectious disease at Emory University.

Looking at how you can safely and effectively avoid those conventional treatments.

How to treat hotspots naturally.

A hot spot is a localized area of skin inflammation and infection due to bacteria.

Hot spots can appear anywhere but are most commonly found on the neck, chest or flank.

Though they can pop up at any time of year, they are more common in the summer months, especially for dogs who are swimming in ponds.

Or spots can grow at an incredibly fast rate – you may notice a small spot in the morning and return from work to a horrid, pus filled mess the size of your fist.

In healthy dogs, hot spots can respond very quickly to the right homeopathic remedy without the need for shaving it down or applying salves and creams.

For hotspots, you'll want to avoid tinctures made with alcohol as they can sting or irritate the area.

Acute prescribing can be quite easy for even the most novice of homeopaths as the remedy you choose will depend on the appearance of the hot spot and the behavior of your dog.

"Some" homeopathic remedies you might want to consider.

Homeopathic veterinarians prescribe remedies based on the physical and mental state of the dog and the remedy will vary according to your dog's overall symptoms.

Hotspots appear quickly and have very specific symptoms, so this makes choosing the right remedy fairly easy.

Here are the major guidelines to help you choose the right remedy:

Apis.

Because *Apis* is made from the honey bee, think of a bee sting.

Hot spots requiring *Apis* will be shiny and swollen with a red or white appearance.

It will also be quite sensitive to touch.

Belladonna.

Hot spots that require *Belladonna* will appear and grow almost instantly and the skin will be bright red, hot and relatively dry.

The dog will appear restless and irritated and will move away from heat.

Graphites.

Graphites is an excellent skin remedy and will be necessary if there is a sticky discharge that appears like honey.

These dogs can tend toward excess weight and the itch and discharge will be worse with warmth.

The surrounding skin and coat may feel greasy and the hot spot will have a cracked appearance.

Mercurius.

These hot spots will also have a yellow or even greenish discharge with a yellow scab.

There may also be hair loss and bleeding around the lesion.

These dogs will also want to move away from heat.

Rhus tox.

Like a rash from poison ivy, the hot spot that requires *Rhus tox* will be red and very itchy with a pimples-like appearance.

There will be swelling and the hot spot will be hardened.

These dogs will prefer warm and will feel better when out moving and walking.

Aconite (Aconitum napellus).

Aconite can be used for animals displaying a lot of anxiety and restlessness during the development of hotspots.

Calendula (lotion).

Calendula is safe for your dog to ingest if he licks it too.

Calendula can be used to treat hotspots caused by various types of skin irritations.

Calendula (marigold) comes in many forms: cream, salve, oil and lotion, teas and tinctures.

Calendula is a well-known herb that can reduce itching and inflammation and promote quick healing of skin tissue.

And the best part is, Calendula is extremely effective for calming the itch.

You can buy calendula products at any health food store.

Apply calendula liberally on the affected area and repeat as often as needed or try this recipe.

¼ teaspoon of table salt

1 cup water

20 -40 drops calendula tincture

Use cotton balls and flush or sponge the lotion on the wound 2 – 4 timed daily.

Hypericum.

Also known as St John's Wort, this herb is useful when combined with calendula to reduce pain and inflammation, and to promote healing.

Hypericum and calendula tincture diluted in water (HyperCal) is an effective and relieving antibacterial wash for hotspots.

You can buy hypericum and calendula tinctures on Amazon or at your local health food store.

Then put 12 to 15 drops of each in 1 cup of warm water.
Use the water as often as necessary to relieve the itching and keep the hotspot clean.
Don't forget to dry the area with a clean cloth when you're done.
You can also buy HyperCal already made – just ask for it at your health food store and they'll know what it is.

Mild Himalayan salt bath.

An effective antibacterial skin solution and a great addition to your HyperCal wash.

Add about 1 teaspoon of salt to 1 cup of water.

You can buy Himalayan salt at health food stores and even gourmet grocery stores.

It's easy to recognize because it's pink!

These are all great topical choices that can be used individually or combined.

If needed clip or trim the hair around the area of the hotspot.

Internal medicine and remedies.

Antioxidants.

Recurring hotspots can often be caused by underlying allergies.
One way to relieve allergies naturally is to feed a diet rich in antioxidants.

Antioxidants come in many forms and from the following foods:

berries

green leafy vegetables

apples

chlorella

spirulina

moringa leaf

olive leaf

kelp

raw meat and organic organ meats (particularly liver).

That being said, a [raw meat based diet](#) is the ultimate in providing a high antioxidant diet.

If your dog requires an extra boost, the use of high doses of **vitamin C** can help dogs with suppressed immune function.

Vitamin C should preferably be a whole foods sourced supplement. Vitamin C can be used to bowel tolerance in difficult cases of allergic inflammation.

This means you'll start with a low dose given in the food (about a quarter to one teaspoon depending on the size of your dog) and increase the amount until your dog has loose stools.

Once you see this, cut back to the last dose where the stools were formed and healthy.

Each dog is different in its requirements for vitamin C.

Essential Fatty Acids.

Essential fatty acids (EFAs), particularly the Omega-3s with EPH & DHA, are important for skin health and can even be used therapeutically to alleviate inflammatory skin disease.

Oils high in Omega-3s include krill, fish and or flaxseed oil.

Be absolutely sure that your EFAs are fresh, cold-pressed, refrigerated and not rancid.

EFA oils go rancid very easily and can cause skin and digestive dysfunction if fed over the long term.

Note ... Coconut oil is very stable and can be stored for longer periods at room temperature.

Buy your EFA oils often and in small amounts.

EFAs should be fed therapeutically up to bowel tolerance (as suggested above) and at around 250 mg per 5 kg of bodyweight for maintenance.

(Related: [Omega-3 For Dogs ... The Ultimate Guide](#))

[Coconut oil](#) has antifungal properties and can be useful both topically and internally ... and it contains medium chain triglycerides that complement the Omega-3 oils.

If your dog has a tendency towards yeast infections, adding coconut oil can be helpful.

Alternating different types of oils is a good way to include coconut oil in your dog's diet, feeding [coconut oil](#) one day and Omega-3 oils the next. You can give your dog 1 teaspoon (5ml) of coconut oil per 5 kg of bodyweight, or 1 tablespoon per 15 kg of body weight.

But ease into it gradually, starting with about a quarter of this amount, then build up slowly.

DMG (dimethylglycine).

DMG is an amino acid and natural immune modulator that supports all types of immune dysfunction including over activity and underactivity of the immune system.

It's particularly good at reducing histamine reactions which are at the root of the formation of hotspots.

This simple supplement can make a huge difference.

It's best assimilated in liquid form and best given in food.

For therapeutic benefits give 3 drops twice daily per 10 kg of bodyweight. For maintenance give 3 drops once daily per 10 kg of bodyweight.

Probiotics – digestive enzymes.

Skin inflammation and allergies can have underlying causes including digestive dysfunction.

Ask your holistic vet if digestive enzyme supplements might help your dog.

Dosage will vary based on the product and your dog's weight.

[Probiotic supplements](#) are another important building block of healthy digestive and skin function.

Probiotics are also known as "good bacteria" ...they help balance your dog's gut flora and control the "bad bacteria" that can affect not only your dog's digestive system, but his overall health as well.

There's evidence showing that a healthy gut can boost the immune system ... so giving probiotics can really help reduce the likelihood of your dog getting hotspots and other skin disorders.

If you suspect your dog has a digestive dysfunction, or recently been on antibiotics or other medications, the dog needs a probiotic supplement. Medications like antibiotics don't distinguish between good and bad bacteria, so if your dog's been taking an antibiotic, the good bacteria in the gut will be damaged.

Giving your dog [probiotic supplements](#) can help restore a healthy gut.

It's also a good idea to give probiotics if your dog has suffered from food poisoning or any prolonged high stress situation.

There are several food sources of probiotics, such as kefir or fermented vegetables, which you can add to your dog's diet.

But if your dog's got hotspots, it's a good idea to give the dog a commercial [probiotic supplement](#) as well for a few weeks.

Choose a high quality, multi-strain, refrigerated brand.

Probiotics come in powder and capsule form.

Many probiotics are dairy based; if your dog doesn't do well with dairy, it's best to look for a nondairy probiotic product.

If you're using a human brand, give a quarter of the recommended human dosage per 15 kg of bodyweight.

This dosage can be doubled for the first one to two months to restore gut flora after antibiotics or other digestive system setbacks.

How to use homeopathic remedies.

Most homeopathic remedies come in little pellets or granules. Many dogs don't mind taking them, as they're sweet-tasting.

If that's the case, you can just twist the container until two or three pellets (or 10 to 15 granules) drop into the cap, then tip them into your dog's cheek (preferably without touching the remedy with your hands).

As long as the pellets or granules come into contact with the gums or other mucous membranes, your dog has been dosed.

But if your dog spits the pellets out, you might need to resort to wet dosing.

Here are some additional [instructions](#) on how to do that.

It's also best to give the remedies **away from food if you can.**

How often to give homeopathic remedies.

Hotspots can come on very suddenly and they usually spread fast, so you need to get the remedy into your dog quickly when you notice a hotspot.

Once you've started dosing your dog, you'll need to keep an eye on the hotspot for changes.

The condition of the hotspot – whether improving or worsening – will guide you as to when you need to give your dog another dose of the remedy.

The general rule is ... if the hotspot is getting better, stop dosing.

Only re-dose when you see the hotspot get worse or the improvement stops.

Dosing guidelines for homeopathic remedies.

Hotspots are acute and fast acting, which means they respond well to dosing with a 30C or 200C potency.

One exception to this advice on potency is that if your dog is extremely distressed or uncomfortable, you can use a 1M potency - give the remedy once per hour up to three times.

Start out by giving your dog a dose every 30 minutes, for up to four doses ... or until you see some improvement.

Continue to evaluate the results in your dog.

Remedies will work quickly with acute, fast moving issues, so you should see a change in the hot spot within an hour or a little more.

Note ... If you see improvement, then wait – do not re-dose.

If you do not see changes, try another remedy.

You shouldn't need a topical treatment if you choose the right remedy. If you want to use a topical treatment, clean the area and apply a calendula solution.

Sprays will work better than creams as the hot spot will heal quicker if it is allowed to dry.

If you see the hotspot start to improve after the first dose or two, there's no need to keep dosing.

Let the hotspot be your guide as you consider whether to re-dose or not. If the hotspot gets worse or the improvement stops, re-dose. If it's still improving, don't re-dose.

When to switch remedies.

If you don't see any changes after three or four doses, then it's time to try a different remedy.

Pick the next one that matches your dog's symptoms.

When you switch to a new remedy, follow the above steps again.

For chronic hot spots.

If your dog suffers from chronic, recurring hotspots, especially if these seem to be due to mental or emotional causes, it's best to consult your homeopathic vet, who may recommend other remedies.

Some commonly used ones are *Pulsatilla*, *Graphites* and *Arsenicum album*.

Countless other homeopathic skin remedies may be used for more chronic cases where hotspots recur and the mental or emotional picture is appropriate.

Bach Rescue Remedy can be useful on a daily basis in cases where there is prolonged household or environmental stress or where life or family changes are affecting your pet.

You can put a few drops in your dog's water bowl, even if there are other dogs in your household (it won't affect them if they don't need it).

Other options to consider.

If your dog gets recurring hotspots and you can't figure out why, there are a couple more options you might ask your holistic vet about.

Glandular supplementation.

If the liver, pancreas, and kidneys, or a combination of all three, are dealing with a high toxin load, improper diet or an autoimmune disease, this could be the reason for your dog's skin problems.

Ask your holistic vet if a glandular supplement might help your dog.

Glandular supplements are usually only available through medical professionals.

Dosage will vary based on the product and the weight of your pet; follow your holistic vet's advice.

General care

In addition to these hotspot solutions, make sure your dog has lots of mental and physical stimulation based on the breeds needs, age and health;

groom your dog often and eliminate the possibility of fleas;

provide fresh, spring water (with no fluoride or chlorine).

Again, remember that natural remedies like the ones recommended here are much safer and more effective for your dog than conventional medicines.

These natural solutions can help solve the issue that's causing your dog's hotspots, whereas most conventional "anti" medicines (such as antibiotics) just suppress the hotspot temporarily, and you'll see it return later.

If you feel you need help, find a homeopathic vet in your area.

With just a little help, you'll be able to treat hotspots and other common issues at home.

