

Dry Skin in Dogs

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Dry skin, or transepidermal water loss, in dogs is a common concern in winter.

Transepidermal water loss can be measured with a TEWL device. Many studies have used this technology to determine what factors contribute to dry skin in dogs. It has been determined that different parts of the skin may have more water loss than other parts of the skin. It has also been determined that relative humidity affects how dry the skin is. Dogs with skin disease have more transepidermal water loss than dogs with normal skin.

Dry skin in dogs may manifest as increased dander and increased itching. These signs are generally *mild*. It is important to ensure that other causes of itching, such as allergies, mange, and infections, are addressed prior to attributing the signs to dry skin. It is also important to check for skin infections. The clinician should make a tape prep or an impression smear of the flaking skin to determine if pyoderma is present or not.

Dry skin can be treated in a number of different ways, but the 'spot-on' products are my favorite treatment for most dogs. There are two main spot-on moisturizing products available. The first is Dermoscent. Dermoscent contains essential oils and has a very nice smell. It is nice for dogs that also suffer from body odor. The second is Douxo Spot On. This spot-on product contains phytosphingosine, which helps to normalize sebaceous gland secretions.

These products are fairly equal for dogs with dry skin. They have slightly different ingredients, so one may work better than another in an individual. The product is applied down the back once per week for one month, then 1 to 2 times per month as needed to maintain hydrated skin.

Stay warm and hydrated!

~ Dr. Heinrich