

Hollywood Insider

2017



Got the Itch?

Itchy pets are no fun. They are miserable, you are miserable; where is the relief??

To combat itchy skin, we must first figure out what the cause is. The number one cause of itchy skin in dogs and cats is fleas. Even in the middle of winter, here in the South, fleas never truly die. We still see fleas all year long. Therefore, we recommend keeping your pets on a flea preventive all year. Our favorite flea prevention for dogs is Bravecto, the 3-month chewable treat that prevents and kills fleas and ticks. It pairs very nicely with Proheart, our 6-month injectable heartworm prevention. We also have Comfortis for dogs, the 1-month chewable tablet that prevents and kills fleas. For cats, we recommend Revolution, the 1-month topical all-in-one prevention (heartworm, flea, ear mites, roundworm, and hookworm). For cats with a bad flea problem, you can give Comfortis, the 1-month tablet that kills and prevents fleas.

The number two cause of itchy skin in pets is atopy, or environmental allergies. However, atopy is much more difficult to control, so we usually skip to the number three cause and try a food elimination trial first.

The number three cause of itchy skin in pets is a food allergy. Dogs and cats can be allergic to all sorts of things

from chicken to duck to eggs. Therefore, we recommend a food elimination trial. First, we would switch your dog to a selective protein diet, such as Royal Canin Potato and Whitefish. Once the animal has been on that diet ONLY for 12 weeks (no additional treats or table food!!) we will see how the skin has responded. If no change, we switch to a different diet. We may even try Royal Canin Hypoallergenic or Ultamino food, the ultimate in non-allergenic foods. If we find a food that your pet responds well to, it is likely that your pet will be on that diet forever. You might be able to slowly start trying treats, upon vet's approval. If we can't find a food that helps, then it is likely that your pet has atopy.

Atopy is the most difficult to control because it is difficult to control the environment. Pets can be allergic to anything – grass, trees, pollens, dust, duck feathers (yes, we once had a duck dog test positive for allergies to duck feathers). There are treatments available to help manage the clinical signs, and some pets respond really well to these things. Testing is the first step to figuring out how to manage your pet's allergies. We can do allergy testing for you; we send the test to a laboratory and receive results within one to two weeks. Once we have an idea of what the allergies are, we can begin trying to get control. There are other drugs

available to help with the signs of allergies, such as Apoquel and medicated shampoos and conditioners, if your veterinarian thinks they are needed.

Every allergy case is different. Some animals respond well and others take more effort. Sometimes, these things can take months to a year to really get control over. If you have a dog or a cat with allergies, you know the struggle. But helping your pet find relief is also a relief for you, and for your vet! Your pet's comfort is our number one goal.

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Inside this issue:

Patellar Luxation	2
Winter Cold	2
Doctor Q & A	3
Case Story – Sophie McNeely	3
Photo Showcase	3
Adopt-a-Pet – "Maddie"	4
Meet the Shiba Inu!	4

Happy New Year!



Patellar Luxation

Have you ever seen your pet not bearing weight on one leg from time to time, or have you brought your pet to the vet and the doctor informed you “your pet has grade ___ patellar luxation?” Do not be alarmed. This condition is very common in small breeds and short-legged breeds.

The patella, more commonly known as the kneecap, glides along a groove in the femur when the knee joint is flexed. This gliding capability of the patella is due to the joint fluid surrounding the joint. Below the groove, there are two rigid bones that limit the movement of

the patella. If the groove where the patella sits is shallow or if the bones below the patella were smooth, this can result in the patella sliding in and out of place. This is what is known as patellar luxation.

We grade patellar luxation on a scale of 1-4, 1 being a very mild case, and 4 being severe.

In some cases, the patella may stay out of place. When this happens, the pet will not bear weight on that leg. This would be considered grade 4 patellar luxation, and requires veterinary attention

immediately and possibly surgery to correct the condition.

A dog that has patellar luxation can experience mild to severe pain, intermittent lameness, and inability to rise or jump. Some pets may show no symptoms, in less severe cases. Every pet is different, but it is important to bring your furry friend to the vet regularly to monitor this condition as well as monitoring your own pet at home.



Tibial Tuberosity Transposition surgery with cerclage wire to prevent rotation

Winter Cold

By Evan in Bossier

Our all-time favorite option is bringing your pet inside!

Although it's warm inside, the weather outside can be frightful! It is very important to keep your pets warm and cozy during the cold winter months.

Frostbite and hypothermia can be true concerns especially for outdoor pets.

Tips to use for keeping your pets warm during the cold months are to use a shelter to protect your pet from the harsh environment. Any structure off the ground

with a roof and 3 sides can suffice to protect animals from cold wind and rain. You can also try putting extra blankets or pillows inside their housing.

If you have a pet that would tolerate clothing, you could try putting sweaters or jackets on them. Pet stores often carry pet socks/booties to protect their feet when going outside.

Our all-time favorite option is bringing your

pet inside! If you do not like having a pet indoors at all times, you could bring them into a small room when temperatures drop below 32 degrees. What better way to help keep yourself warm than to cuddle with a pet with his/her own fur coat to keep you two warm!

Ask the Doctor!

Q: What can I do about my dog's bad breath?

A: Dental disease is among the most common problems that we see on a daily basis. Can you imagine what our teeth would look like or our breath smell like if we never brushed? The first step to conquering dental disease and bad breath is to have an exam performed by a veterinarian to determine the extent of the dental problem. We need to determine the cause of the infection, whether it be just from tarter buildup, abscessed teeth, growths, or even foreign bodies. I have seen many dogs with things like sticks, bones, or even hair caught in the mouth causing bad breath. With significant dental disease, it is likely that we will recommend a cleaning and further exam while under general anesthesia. General anesthesia with intubation is necessary to protect their airway and minimize stress and discomfort while using the ultrasonic scaler to clean their teeth. It also allows us to utilize a probe that is gently inserted beneath the gum line to help localize periodontal pockets and determine the extent of the periodontal disease. Some clinics now have the ability to take dental x-rays which is an even better way to assess periodontal disease.

There are a variety of dental chews and dental diets to help slow the buildup of tarter. Care must be taken to ensure that your pet doesn't swallow large pieces that could cause a foreign body obstruction. The best way to keep their breath fresh and minimize tarter buildup is by brushing their teeth on a daily basis. It is ideal to start this when they are young but adults can be trained to accept brushing as well. Toothpaste specially made and flavored for animals must be used instead of human toothpaste as it can contain ingredients that are harmful. There are a variety of brushes that can be tried to determine which you or your pet prefers. It is best to start slow and make it a positive experience. Start by just rubbing the toothpaste on the gums with your finger. Once this is tolerated, lift the lips and start with brushing the front teeth. After this is tolerated, begin working your way around the sides. Focus on the outside of the teeth and the gum line. Provide plenty of praise along the way, and treats are very beneficial as well. Just take it slow, and try to always end on a good note. It is ideal to brush daily but even a couple of times a week can be beneficial.

~Dr. Doug Landry

Sophie McNeely & Skin Allergies

Sophie is a 12-year-old spayed Shih Tzu that presented to us in October 2014 for excessive generalized scratching and licking at her paws. On physical exam, we noted hair loss with red and inflamed skin and evidence of a bacterial infection of the skin. Bacterial infections or pyodermas are usually secondary to an underlying allergy.

Skin allergies are grouped into three categories; flea hypersensitivity, food allergies, and atopy- environmental allergens such as dust mites, pollens, plants, etc. In order to treat the infection, antibiotics and anti-itch medications are required along with figuring out why Sophie has the skin infection in the first place. We started Sophie on an antibiotic, anti-inflammatory medication to help with severe itching and a medicated shampoo. She has also been on a good quality flea preventative to rule out flea hypersensitivity. Multiple rechecks following this treatment revealed improvements but did not quite resolve the problem.

She presented again a few months later for the same skin issues. We noted that Sophie was still having problems with a bacterial infection on her skin. We again gave her relief by trying a new anti-inflammatory and Apoquel. Apoquel is a drug that controls itching in dogs with allergic and atopic dermatitis. Sophie showed improvements while on Apoquel for about 8 months, until it also did not provide itch relief.

In April of 2016, Sophie came back to PetStar and saw Dr. Landry. His physical

exam revealed the same hair loss, red, inflamed skin and pyoderma. He performed a skin scrape to rule out skin parasites such as demodex, sarcoptic mites, and lice. She was negative for all mites at that time. He treated Sophie with antibiotics since she had a skin infection and a new drug called Atopica. Atopica is an immunosuppressant that is used to help control itching associated with atopic dermatitis. It helps to prevent the immune system from producing such a severe itch reaction to environmental allergens.



Dr. Landry also started a food trial with a hypoallergenic diet to rule out food hypersensitivity. A food trial is a 12-week diagnostic test where Sophie ate only this hypoallergenic diet. Dogs are usually allergic to the protein in a diet such as chicken, beef, pork, or lamb. These hypoallergenic diets have novel proteins that are not used in over the counter diets, which most dogs will not have an allergic response. Some hypoallergenic diets are also hydrolyzed diets in which the protein complexes have been broken down so small that hopefully the immune system will not recognize as allergenic.

Sophie's recheck appointments revealed great improvements and she continued the Atopica and hypoallergenic diet until about 5 months later when she returned to Dr. Landry for a relapse in her allergies. Dr. Landry checked her thyroid level, ruling out hypothyroidism (can cause chronic skin signs similar to Sophie's), and performed an outside laboratory allergy test (testing for environmental allergens) Both test returned normal. He also treated her with Ivermectin to rule out any skin parasites that could be causing her signs.

Sophie presented to Dr. Dufrene in November 2016 for a semi-annual exam and still having chronic itching and traumatic chewing of her paws. We tried a new antibiotic to treat her skin infection and started an anti-fungal medication to treat yeast. Yeast is a fungus that can cause itchy, oily skin that is usually secondary to excessive scratching and other allergens. She showed improvement and the antifungals were continued at her recheck exam about 1 month later. She is still showing great improvements at this time with occasional licking at her paws. This case is a great example of how frustrating allergies can be to diagnose and treat. If the veterinarians and owners work together, control and good quality of life can be achieved; it just may take some time.

PetStar Animal Care
820 Keyser Ave.
Natchitoches, LA 71457
318-352-1164

<http://natchitoches.petstar.net>

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Treatment



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Coming Next Month

Dental Care

Microchipping

**Puppy Training
Tips**

**Meet the Selkirk
Rex Cat!**

At PetStar, our primary focus is to provide you with the most advanced and compassionate veterinary care. Our dedicated veterinary team members cater to your pet's needs in a new, state-of-the-art facility. We have two staff veterinarians supported by a team of well-trained and caring assistants and administrative staff. PetStar offers a unique combination of general veterinary care and boarding, as well as advanced procedures in small animal medicine, surgery and dentistry.

The PetStar Newsletter is dedicated to each of our friends that we have lost along the way. It has been a pleasant journey, and you will always be a part of the PetStar family. You will remain forever in our hearts.

Hope For Paws Pet of the Month!

"Maddie"

Maddie is a 1 1/2 year old Rat Terrier mix looking for her forever home. She is spayed, up to date on her shots and heart worm prevention, house trained, and great with other dogs. We're unsure how she is with cats or children, but given her good nature we would think she'd be great. A fenced yard and vet reference along with an adoption fee of \$100.00 is required for her adoption. If interested please send your information to natchitocheshopeforpaws@yahoo.com.



Meet the Shiba Inu!

The Shiba Inu is an ancient breed which originated in Japan. They are the smallest of the Japanese hunting dogs. They are often described as "cat-like" because they are independent and are constantly grooming themselves or other members of their pack.

Shiba Inus are smart dogs. They are easy to housebreak. They are athletic and agile. And they can be good escape artists, so keep an eye on them if outdoors.

Shiba Inus are known for not barking, but instead making "yodeling" noises and what is called the "Shiba scream."

They can be a little possessive of toys and can be territorial when other dogs come around.



Photo courtesy of ePet Health

The Shiba Inu has a dense coat that comes in a variety of colors; the most prominent being a reddish tan and white. Their ears are small and stand erect, and they have a curled bushy tail.

Breed Characteristics:

Life expectancy: 12-13 yrs
Weight: 18-22 lbs
Colors: variety
Other Names: Shiba
Class: Companion
(originally small game hunting)