



ABOUT THE DISEASE

Seborrhea is a skin disorder typically seen in canine patients. There are three types:

- **Seborrhea sicca:** causes dry, flaky skin
- **Seborrhea oleosa:** causes an overproduction of oil that can lead to a greasy hair coat
- **Seborrheic dermatitis:** causes a secondary skin infection

The skin typically accumulates waxy, greasy clumps around the ears, on the abdomen, in the armpits, around the elbows, and around the ankles. This buildup often has a foul odor, and if patients are self-traumatizing, it can lead to bleeding, crusting, hair loss, and secondary infections due to skin damage.

Some canine breeds are more predisposed through an inherited disorder, typically around 2-3 years old. These breeds may include:

- West Highland White Terriers
- Cocker Spaniels
- English Springer Spaniels
- Basset Hounds
- Dachshunds
- Labrador Retrievers
- Golden Retrievers
- German Shepherds
- Dobermans
- Shar-Peis

Some patients may have underlying diseases that have predisposed to the development of **seborrhea**. These conditions may include:

- Food or environmental allergies
- Hormonal or endocrine disorders
- Skin parasites
- Autoimmune diseases

OBTAINING A DIAGNOSIS

Testing is typically geared towards determining an underlying disease and the extent of infection present.

These tests may include:

- Blood work including hormone testing
- Skin cytology and/or skin scrapings
- Skin cultures for bacterial and fungal infections, including ringworm
- Skin biopsy

TREATMENT

Treatment is aimed at the underlying cause, because unfortunately there is no specific treatment for primary **seborrhea**.

In general, treatments that help manage **seborrhea** include:

- Omega-3 fatty acid supplements
- Anti-seborrheic shampoos
- Oral immune modulating medications (cyclosporine, glucocorticoids, etc.)
- Antibiotics when necessary to treat secondary bacterial infections

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- Prognosis is better if an underlying cause has been identified and treated.
- Many dogs will have an odor associated with **seborrhea**. This odor is usually worsened if complicated by a secondary bacterial or yeast skin infection.