

COMMON AILMENTS

DRY AND ITCHY SKIN, COAT PROBLEMS

Symptoms: Near constant scratching and/or biting the coat and skin, fur loss and breakage. Chewing on paws, pink or inflamed skin on the belly and/or inside of thighs, ongoing issues with ear infections.

Causes: Allergies (most common), parasites (fleas/ticks/ear mites), fungal infections (worms). Allergies can cause infections from the dog scratching and then getting infected, so the sooner the problem is fixed the better.

ALLERGIES

These types of problems can be nutritionally based or contact dermatitis, and are usually hard to diagnose.

Contact dermatitis is skin irritation that can arise literally overnight, causing a dog to react to a substance or surface that he's never had any problems tolerating in the past. Common triggers for contact dermatitis include household chemicals and cleaners, laundry detergent, shampoos and dog perfumes, and fabrics like wool.

Remedy: Thoroughly bathe the dog and confine it to a specific area to prevent contact with suspected substance.

Nutritionally based allergies are harder to diagnose, the easiest way to figure out what the dog is allergic to is process of elimination.

Remedy: Discontinue anything that has nutritional value (rawhide, treats, etc.), just feed food and water.

- If this solves the problem add back treats/rawhide slowly to try and figure out what triggered it in the first place.
- If this does not solve the problem a food change is the next step. Generally lamb, fish, and duck based foods are recommended since they are easier to digest. At this point it will be trying different foods until one is found that works. Foods with a good amount of chicken fat or fish oils will also help keep the coat healthy. Food transitions will take 2-3 weeks before seeing results, in this time an oatmeal based shampoo can be used to help relieve symptoms.

FLEAS/TICKS

Fleas and ticks are carriers of other diseases and worms so it is important to get rid of them as soon as possible.

Remedy: There are sprays, shampoos, squeeze-on treatments, and collars. The treatment will depend on the size of dog; any of these should only be used on dogs 6 months or older. Never use more than 1 treatment on a dog. Ticks can dig into the skin and in some cases must be physically removed by the head.

EAR MITES

Symptoms: Intense itching, scratching, and constant head shaking. The ears will have a reddish brown discharge, or a black and waxy discharge.

Remedy: Clean and dry ears thoroughly. Apply Heximite as directed.

WORMS

All puppies at Paradise are dewormed; however this does not mean they are immune to getting worms.

ROUNDWORM/TAPEWORM

Symptoms: Diarrhea, Weight Loss, Loss of appetite or the animal may be very hungry but not gain weight, Vomiting, Poor-looking coat, Bloated abdomen, You may or may not see actual worms in the stool or vomit, Anemia (pale gum color)

*It is very important to treat roundworm infestation since they **can be transmitted to humans**.

Remedy: Use of a dewormer. Will require 3 treatments, first treatment will kill any worms and the second treatment (a week after the first) will kill any worms that have hatched since the first treatment. A third treatment another 14 days after the second treatment will kill any worms that made it through the initial treatments.

HEARTWORM

Symptoms: Decreased tolerance for exercise, coughing (especially when laying down), bloated belly, increased breathing rate or breathing difficulty, jugular veins (in the neck) may become enlarged, loss of appetite.

Fainting, particularly following exercise or too much heat. Often the dog will look disoriented or drunk and fall over. This must be distinguished from a seizure. The easiest way is to look at your pet's gum color. If it is white or very pale, it's probably a fainting episode. If the gum color is pink or red it is probably a seizure. Also, during a seizure the dog will tend to be less responsive (and not know who you are)

Severe pain or inability to move the hind legs. (This rarely occurs in the front legs). This sign is most common in cats, although it can also occur in dogs. This may occur if a blood clot that formed in the heart becomes lodged in the aorta, where it branches to the hind legs. It can occur in other parts of the body as well. This is an extremely painful condition and usually the animal will cry out and be paralyzed in the hind legs.

Remedy: Must see a vet immediately and get prescription medicine.

DIARRHEA/VOMITING

Most common cause is the dog getting into something and then getting an upset stomach.

Remedy: Provide lots of water to prevent dehydration

If the dog exhibits any of the following signs, get him to a vet immediately:

- Black stool with a tar like consistency
- Extremely foul smelling stool
- Diarrhea accompanied by vomiting
- Severe pain during defecation
- Fever
- Loss of appetite