

Skin Problems in Pets

Dogs and cats suffer from many problems affecting their skin. The skin is an organ that protects the body from infection, caustic substances, ultraviolet light, and dehydration. Good skin health is dependent on the condition and function of the other organs which make up our pets' bodies. Following are brief descriptions of some common diseases and their diagnosis and treatment:

Allergies: Most allergens are inhaled, but some are found in food, most commonly corn, wheat, soy, beef, and dairy products. The first signs of allergic reaction are scratching, licking, biting, or rubbing the skin. This can lead to infection characterized by red bumps or pimples. Because of the discomfort, it is important to get professional help as soon as possible.

Bacterial infection: Usually secondary to another disease. It's important to treat the infection while searching for the underlying disease.

Acute moist dermatitis (hot spots): Usually a result of self-trauma and resulting infection as your pet tries to relieve itself from some pain or itch. Treatment includes thorough cleaning, antibiotics, and anti-inflammatory drugs.

Pyoderma: Includes a wide range of infections resulting in pus formation, varying in severity. Treatment is similar to that for hot spots, but typically is longer-term.

Atopy or allergic inhalant dermatitis: Very itchy skin disease resulting from allergies to microscopic particles in the air. Treatment may include dietary supplements, antihistamines, and steroids, and is often long-term. In difficult cases, skin allergen testing may be helpful.

Ectoparasites (external parasites): Include mites, fleas, and ticks. These parasites open the skin barrier to bacterial infections. They also may lead to allergic conditions. Treatment may include antiparasitic drugs, shampoos, and rinses.

Fungal infections: Include *Malassezia dermatitis* (yeast infection) and *dermatophytosis* (ringworm). Treatment includes antifungal topical and systemic drugs, and shampoos and rinses.

Yeast infections are familiar to many dog owners as the source of itchy, smelly ears and skin. Yeast overgrowth occurs in response to a primary problem such as allergy or seborrhea. The underlying problem must be controlled, to prevent recurrent yeast dermatitis. It is common for allergic dogs to require periodic or ongoing anti-yeast therapy.

Food allergies: Often manifest as skin problems. These are usually diagnosed by ruling out other possible conditions. Treatment is trial feeding of hypoallergenic diets for a minimum of six weeks.

Irritant contact dermatitis: Diagnosed based on history of contact. Treatment includes washing the exposed areas to remove the irritant. Patients that are itchy are given steroids for a short period of time. It is important to prevent re-exposure.

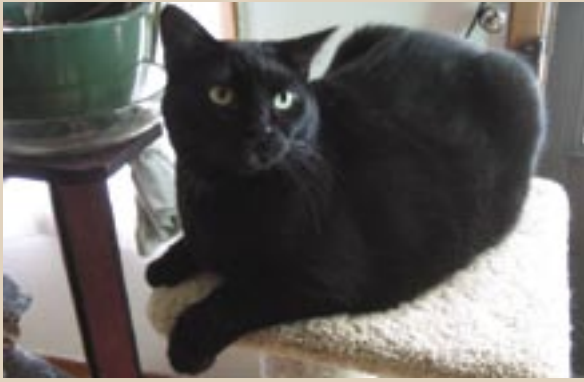
Autoimmune skin diseases: There are several autoimmune skin diseases and the foundation of diagnosis is surgical biopsy. Treatments may include combinations of dietary supplements, steroids, and immune modulation drugs.

Continued on page 8



Note that ringworm is not a worm at all; it is the common name for the skin infection caused by a special group of fungi that feed on dead skin and hair cells, causing (in people) a classic round, red lesion with a ring of scale around the edges and normal recovering skin in the center. Because the ring of irritated, itchy skin looks like a worm, the infection was erroneously named. The fungi responsible are called dermatophytes, meaning "plants that live on the skin." The characteristic ring is primarily a human phenomenon. In animals, ringworm frequently looks like a dry, grey, scaly patch but can mimic any other skin lesion and have any appearance.

FEATURED CAT



Sheba

So many black cats of our acquaintance are friendly, laid-back, and affectionate, and Sheba is no exception. She is outgoing, enjoys meeting new people, and keeps everyone amused with her antics.

Her favorite toy right now is a stick with a little strip of fabric attached – nothing fancy, but it keeps her entertained for hours. She trots around the house dragging it behind her, looking for somebody to enjoy her clever game. Sheba likes a cat tree to climb and a window perch with good viewing possibilities. She's most active at night, so those who retire early and require silence should not apply.

Sheba has a chirpy meow, which she uses often to let you know when she's ready to play, when she's hungry, or when she just wishes you'd sit down so she can get in your lap. She is both inquisitive and exploratory, and adaptable enough to make herself at home anywhere. Sheba does not get upset easily, but has a very sassy personality.

She loves her food a bit too much, and needs a person who can regulate her diet and resist her "puppy dog eyes."

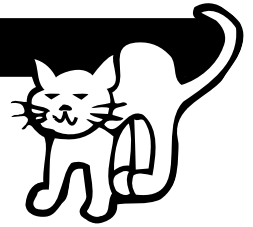
Sheba prefers to be an "only child," and isn't particularly interested in sharing her people with other cats. Sheba has a touch of asthma, which is easily managed and doesn't affect her quality or length of life. She is spayed, up to date on her vaccines, and has tested negative for FIV and FeLV.

She is approximately seven or eight years old: old enough to have good manners, but young enough to be playful and entertaining.

If you are interested in meeting Sheba, phone Pam, our cat coordinator, at 503-284-8768 evenings and weekends.

THE KITTY CORNER

Winter is Coming



Each fall when cooler weather approaches, we get calls like this: "I've been feeding this stray cat for six months and now I want to find him a good home before winter comes." This call should have been made five months ago.

When a friendly, unknown cat appears on your doorstep, first try to determine if it is truly a stray. Take the cat to your vet and have it scanned for a microchip. While there, ask the vet to determine its gender, and whether it is spayed or neutered. This takes just a few minutes and should be done for no charge. This information will help identify the cat for an owner who may be searching for it.

If there is a microchip, the vet will help you contact the microchip company. If no chip is found, you can search locally for the cat's owner by taking the following steps:

- Make a collar out of a piece of 1/4" or 1/2" white elastic long enough to fit around the cat's neck with room to slide two fingers underneath and stitch it closed. Write on it "If this is your cat, please call [your phone number]." Put the collar on the cat.
- List the cat as found on the websites listed below. Search the lost cat listings for any potential matches.
- Create a found cat flyer and post it around your neighborhood, at vet clinics, pet supply stores, grocery stores, coffee shops, and anywhere else people gather. (See link to flyer template below.)
- Establish a regular feeding routine (time and place), so it will be easy to pick up and transport the cat when required.

With luck, the cat's owner will be located, but if not, have a back-up plan. If you can't adopt the cat yourself, now is the time to contact local shelters and rescue groups. There is usually a long waiting period for accepting cats. Make sure you are working with a reputable organization with clearly stated policies about rescue and placement.

Once you've found the owner, adopted the cat, or placed it with a shelter or rescue, remember to remove all the flyers you've posted, and thank everyone who helped you with your search. Please contact us if you need more advice.

Lost and Found Websites:

Multnomah County Animal Services

www.co.multnomah.or.us/dbcs/pets/lostFound.shtml

Dove Lewis Emergency Animal Hospital

dovewis.org/lostandfound/

Portland Craigslist local internet classified ads

portland.craigslist.org/laf/

Oregonian newspaper and website

www.oregonlive.com/oregonian • 503-221-8000.

Cats in the Bag website, lost/found flyer template

www.sonic.net/~pauline/search.html

--- Pam Brooks
Cat Coordinator

Fences For Fido

There's a new group in our area whose work we admire, and want to share with our readers.

With inspiration from the Coalition to Un-Chain Dogs, based in North Carolina, a group of Portland volunteers created Fences For Fido, with the mission to improve the quality of life for dogs living at the end of a chain outdoors, by building fences at no charge to the dog's family.

The group seeks donations and sponsorships to cover the cost of the fence materials, new or improved shelters, and spay/neuter services if needed. They also work to raise awareness of the physical, mental, and emotional needs of dogs and why chaining a dog is inhumane and dangerous.

Fences For Fido works with Multnomah County Animal Services and Oregon Humane Society to provide referrals and help families better understand and care for their dogs.

At least six projects have been completed since the group became active in May 2009. The most recent was for Cooper, seen here, who received a new insulated shelter in addition to the freedom to run free in his new fenced yard.

"Removing chains and building fences helps foster better relationships between families and their dogs," says FFF President Andrea Lozil. "Our clients are real-life examples of the difference a fence makes. Fencing is better than long-term tethering – for dogs, their families, and our communities. If you know a dog in need, please contact us."

Contact Fences For Fido at www.fencesforfido.org.



Cooper on his chain

Photos courtesy of David Childs, www.DavidChildsPhotography.com.



Cooper enjoys a safe place to run and play.

Facts We Should All Know About Dogs

- Dogs are pack animals who want and need socialization and companionship.
- The Animal Welfare Act prohibits dog chaining as the primary means of confinement.
- The American Veterinary Medical Association warns that chaining a dog can contribute to aggressive behavior.
- The Centers for Disease Control states that chained dogs are 2.8 times more likely to bite than unchained dogs.



CAT SUCCESS STORIES

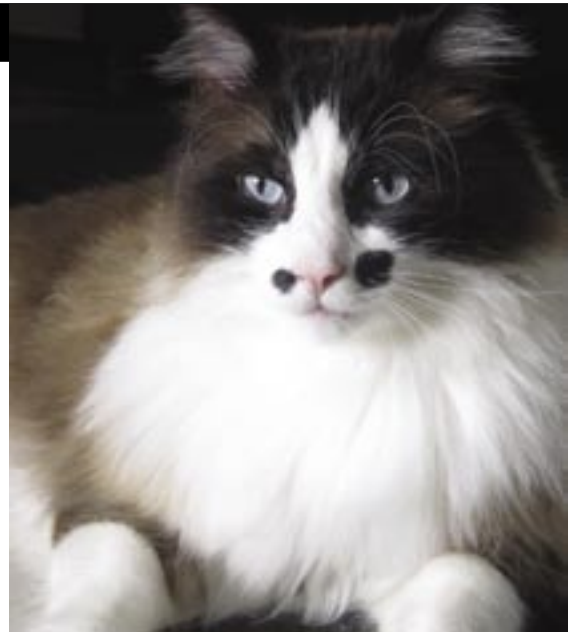
Charlie

We adopted Charlie from you and we are overjoyed to have him. He has managed to seamlessly fit himself into our life, and has become a wonderful companion and playmate for our other cat, MungoJerry.

Although Charlie was initially very shy and reserved, they now tumble about the apartment chasing each other and both sprawl out on the bed with us every night. Charlie has completely won us over with his easy-going personality and extreme self confidence. He likes nothing better than to lie on my chest, paws around my neck, head tucked under my chin, and purr. And drool. And he always manages to be there as soon as I wake up.

Adopting from ARCF was so easy and wonderful. Your program really puts the cats' need for a good home first and foremost. Thank you for a wonderful addition to our family!

Lily and Carl



Boris and Natasha

Our house was very empty and quiet after we lost our kitty of 19 years. After several months we figured it was time to start looking for new friends. The search was unsuccessful for weeks until we met Boris and Natasha! Two coincidences told us they were meant to be ours: all of our previous cats were named after cartoon characters, and we met and adopted Boris and Natasha on the same day we had adopted our previous kitty, 15 years earlier.

They are sassy, happy, and loving. They mean the world to us. Many thanks to Ron and ARCF for their foster care of Boris and Natasha before they came home.

Ken and Michelle Riddle



Boris (orange) & Natasha (grey)

Fern

From Loretta and Bud Clark, who adopted Fern a year ago, we received a generous donation on her adoption anniversary, and this note:

"Fern passed her annual exam with flying colors. If possible, she gets more lovable every day. We'll be indebted to you and Lenore forever for giving us Fern."



Fluffy (formerly Scrappy)

Fluffy is a very good cat. We have become very good friends. We take good care of him. He follows me everywhere! He sits with me while I eat and do homework. He sleeps with me, too! We have a carpet tower and he loves it.

Stephen Leeb

We adopted Fluffy in September. He truly is the perfect cat. He gets along well with our three dogs and our other cat. He is perfectly happy indoors and he loves to play. Fluffy is such a wonderful addition to our family. Thank you, Nancy and Carlos, and ARCF!

Karen Leeb (Stephen's mom)



MORE CAT SUCCESS STORIES

Asia *(formerly Bonnie)*

Asia loves to roam the house, sitting in different windows to observe the night. She sleeps in the bed with Musta and us. She loves to play with catnip mice and toys that have feathers. Our Musta loves chasing a red pen light, but Asia just looks at us as if to say, "Do you think that I am really that gullible?" Asia also loves the cat tree. She is getting used to being brushed every day and she is fascinated by the self-cleaning litter box. Asia is also starting to talk to us more; she and Musta chat with each other quite a bit. The conclusion is that we now have "big sweetie" Musta and "little sweetie" Asia.

We now have also a German Shepherd puppy that Musta and Asia are training together. Most cats want their own dog anyway. Asia is getting to be quite a self-assured young lady and is now enjoying her life worry-free.

Hannamari and Michel McDowell



Claire, Huck, & Phinn

Huck and Phinn

It has been so relaxing to come home to cats who greet you at the door every day, anxiously awaiting your arrival and the soon-to-come cuddle time. Huck and Phinn are very outgoing and people-friendly, and they have quickly won over our hearts. We have turned into those people who show pictures of their "kids" at parties and somehow find the conversation leading back to the time Huck and Phinn did something absolutely adorable. We will stop there before we start sounding too cheesy and sentimental.

*Thanks ARCF,
Amanda and Claire*



Christe, ChiChi, & Luka

ChiChi and Luka

ChiChi and Luka are fabulous. I recently moved and got married. My wife had one cat named Baloney and now all three get along great. We are expecting a baby in the near future and are looking forward to the cats meeting baby Mia. ChiChi and Luka absolutely love Christe and she has grown very fond of them. I would like others to know how great your organization is and how happy I am with my decision to adopt these wonderful kitties!

*Best wishes,
Matt McLemore*



Zoe & Miles

Zoe and Miles *(formerly Fontina & Cheddar)*

Zoe and Miles are incredible, and we are crazy about them. They entertain us all the time. Miles is a little purr machine. Zoe is still a bit stand-offish at times, but we are patient. They are having a great time exploring the house. Who knew that bathtubs could be so fascinating?

Andrea & Rob Mumford

What's Another Orange Cat?



Grace

Five of our six current cats are from ARCF so I am sending along updates on all of them.

Grace (formerly Lulu) was adopted in 2002. When our alpha cat, Sam, died six months later, Grace swiftly assumed that role. She developed asthma and has some arthritis, but is still going strong.

Around March of 2003 my sister wanted us to meet the "perfect kitty" that had showed up on her porch. "He" turned out to be a very pregnant black cat. My sister adopted Luna and began looking for homes for the kittens. We resisted, assuming that Grace would eat any kitten we brought home. She loved us, but still had major trust issues and didn't seem to want more feline companionship.

Eventually my sister wore us down and we brought home Zora. We were shocked when this little ball of fur walked right up to Grace, who immediately started gently cleaning



Zora

her. Grace quickly earned the nickname "Big Mama." She became more trusting and social, a completely transformed cat almost overnight.

In December of 2008 we got Lucy, a St. Bernard puppy, and the dynamics of the house changed drastically. In 2009 we

lost Chester and Charlie (formerly Tanner). We were down to two cats and no orange ones.

We saw Huck and Phinn on the website, and called Pam. They had already been adopted, but there was another orange guy, called Duke. While reading about Duke, Jim fell in love with the picture of Nott so we arranged to meet them both.

Nott was very shy but still managed to melt our hearts so we decided to see if she could fit into our house. Then it was off to meet Duke and it was instantly clear that he would come home with us that night. We went back for Nott the next day.

No one was sure how they would get along with the dog but we were hopeful. Turns out that



Nott

Duke loves to taunt Lucy and Nott loves to eat the dog kibble so it worked out fine.

In June we adopted another St. Bernard puppy. Ethel is very mellow and much more easy-going than Lucy.

A few weeks after getting Ethel I happened to see Cheddar, Fontina, Cheeto, and Colby on the ARCF website and told Jim to take a look at the cute orange kitties, never thinking that we would end up adopting. Jim said, "Well, six cats aren't really much more than four; as long as you are on litter box duty, I think we should go meet them."

We were positive we would want Cheeto since he looked just like Charlie and we were still missing him a lot. We were intrigued with Fontina since orange girls are rare, but it was Colby who just climbed into Jim's lap and started purring. That's all it took. We did a slow introduction, but within a few days it was obvious they wanted out of their private suite and the other critters wanted them out too. So we let them free and what a change! Duke immediately took over the role of papa, playing with them for hours. Nott began coming out a lot and really became a mama to them since they obviously did NOT know when they needed cleaning according to her!

We've never had two kittens at the same time and we've discovered it is a real joy. They have their set fight times of about 5:00 am, 9:30 am, 5:00 pm, and 11:30 pm. Colby is usually the instigator but then once he gets Cheeto going, Cheeto can hold his own. Colby is also a little love bug and will flop down anywhere and start purring.

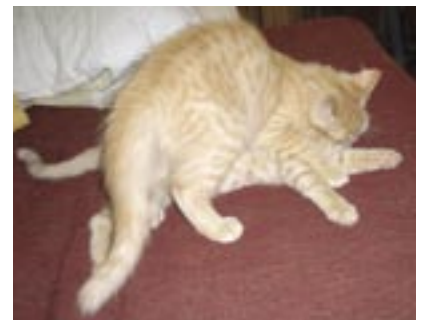
They were both instantly intrigued by the puppies and are fearless around them. We have a "dog pound" off the kitchen, closed off with baby gates. The boys love to go in there and taunt the dogs. One day when they were still small, Colby got into the dog pound by scaling the baby gate but Ethel was sitting in front of the gate when he decided he wanted out. He couldn't figure out how to get around her to the gate, so he just hopped on Ethel's head, sat there for a minute and then jumped off into freedom!

Thanks,
Kelly and Jim
Brougham

Cheeto & Colby fighting



Duke



A Little White Cat

Some of our readers may wonder why we insist that every effort be made to locate an owner for every stray “found” cat. Many of you will say, “But the cat looks terrible, it shouldn’t be returned to a home where it wasn’t cared for properly.” Here’s a little story that illustrates the problem with that thinking.

One day a little white cat showed up in the yard of an ARCF foster home. The cat was scared, hungry, dirty, and obviously lost. She wouldn’t let us approach her, so we made a small temporary shelter and put out food and water. We posted her as found on all the usual websites, put up flyers, placed an ad in the paper, talked to all the neighbors, and waited for her people to come looking for her.

A week went by and there was no response, the rainy weather had set in, and the cat was eating less and less each day, obviously very stressed. Finally, we decided to use a humane trap to capture her and take her to a vet for an exam and scan for a microchip. That day, while carrying out the old papers to the recycle bin, we took one more look through the lost pet ads. In a week-old paper there was an ad for a lost white cat, but the location was several miles away.

We called anyway, and the woman who answered was so glad to hear from us she wanted to come immediately. We reminded her that the chances were slim, because of the distance involved. She replied that she was getting ready for the most important job interview of her life, but she was going to postpone it – she wanted her cat back, now.

In about 15 minutes Barbara showed up, hair wet from the shower, in her sweats, and went out into the yard where the little cat was cowering under a shrub.

“Fanny?” she called, and immediately there came a weak meow in reply from under the shrub. Then Fanny emerged and went straight to her mom. “I thought she was gone forever”, Barbara said, and burst into tears.

Fanny was an indoor cat who had somehow gotten out of the apartment unnoticed. Barbara panicked and began looking for her immediately, but she didn’t have internet access and didn’t subscribe to the daily paper. She had placed her ad but hadn’t seen ours.

Fanny was found one week after she got out, about seventy blocks away from her home. Did she somehow wander that far? Did she somehow wander that far? Did someone pick her up and dump her? Fanny isn’t talking, but we do know that she is deeply loved and very happy to be back in her home.



Luella White was broken hearted at the loss of her loving cat George last summer. He fell asleep on her bed one day, and just didn’t wake up.



Mary Kadderly lost her rescued cat Ray after four years together. Ray was about 12 years old when he wandered into Mary’s life. He had issues that made him difficult to live with at times, but he was lucky enough to find Mary, who cared for him through the kidney disease that finally took him. Ray was a soulful character who will be missed by all who knew him, including his close feline companion, Billy.



Sally and Paul Needham lost Maizie, a rescued cat adopted four years ago. Maizie had been adopted and returned to the shelter twice, both times because of a new baby in the household. Sally and Paul promised her a baby-free future. Maizie was 14 years old when she lost her fight with cancer. She is also missed by her feline friend, Kennedy.



Nadine Smith reported losing Lorraine (known to all as “Rainey”) in June, after a short illness.

Rainey was adopted from ARCF with her daughter Dot three years ago. She was a sweet, shy girl and leaves a very big hole in her family.



Margaret Trissell lost Molly, her 14-year-old poodle who was a constant companion to her family and a delight to all who met her.



Matt Pipes lost his adored dog Nahele, a devoted friend who was deeply loved and will be missed forever.



Hengameh Salem lost her cat Jambo. He was a gorgeous, friendly, and humorous cat. Her heart is broken along with the rest of his extended family.

Animal Talk is a quarterly newsletter published by Animal Rescue & Care Fund, Inc. and printed locally.

Our Mission: To rescue, shelter, and care for homeless animals and place them in permanent, responsible homes; to promote and support spay/neuter for all companion animals.

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Animal Rescue & Care Fund, Inc., is a private, non-profit, tax-exempt corporation funded solely by private donations. A board of directors makes decisions on policy and activities. All funds are used exclusively for veterinary care, food, classified advertising to find suitable homes to place animals, and publishing the quarterly newsletter, *Animal Talk*. Volunteers provide good temporary homes until the animals are placed in responsible, permanent homes.

Animal Placements

For May-June-July: We placed 23 cats in new loving, responsible homes. Our major expenses were:

* Veterinary Fees: \$23,263.58
Advertising: \$0
** Food, Special Meds: \$1,120.79
Newsletter: \$1,140.58

* These expenses include veterinary care for the dogs of Portland's homeless. We also had expenses for injured and sick pets and emergency vet visits.

** Most volunteers pay for food and litter for the animals they care for as their contribution to the cause.

SKIN PROBLEMS

Continued from page 1

Secondary skin disease: Secondary skin diseases resulting from conditions such as hypothyroidism are diagnosed via clinical testing. Diagnosis often requires blood tests, biopsies, and X-rays. Treatment of the underlying condition usually improves the skin problems.

Your pet's skin problems often combine two or more diseases. For example, flea hypersensitivity can lead to pyoderma. Because of the complicated interactions between the skin and other organs within the body, diagnosis may be difficult and treatment may involve trial and error.

The skin scrape is the mainstay of diagnosis. Several small areas of your pet's skin are shaved to remove hair. A scalpel blade is used to take a small sample from the top layer of skin. The resulting material is viewed under a high-powered microscope. In addition to skin scrapes, blood tests and surgical biopsies are necessary to diagnose some skin diseases.

Treatment of skin disease may include steroids, antibiotics, antihistamines, topical drugs, antifungal drugs, shampoos and rinses, dietary modification, and surgical removal of masses. In some cases, therapy must be continued for months and even for life.

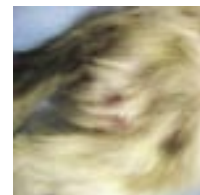
Skin diseases can be challenging and time-consuming to diagnose and treat, so it's important to contact your veterinarian right away if you see or suspect skin problems in your pet.



moist dermatitis



very bad ear mites



flea dermatitis

YES! I want to help

Animal Rescue & Care Fund, Inc., depends entirely on your donations. Our work includes rescue, medical aid, food and shelter, humane education, neutering/spaying, and more. All workers are volunteers. Your contribution goes directly to help the animals. All contributions are tax-deductible.

Make a secure online donation using a credit card, debit card, or PayPal account. Save time and postage!
Visit our website for more details, www.pdx-petadoption.org.

- I enclose _____ for humane work. (\$35 sponsors an animal, but we appreciate any amount)
- Sponsors can check here to receive a story and a photo about the animal being fostered.
- I'd like to contribute \$ _____ for the ARCF Microchipping Program, for adopted animals to have microchips.
- I'm interested in being a volunteer. Please contact me at _____.

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