

# DOWNES

Veterinary Surgeons

## Pet skin problems

### Flea allergy

Perhaps the most common of pet skin conditions is flea allergy. It is easy to treat – provided all aspects of the flea problem are tackled vigorously. We can supply you with the means to do this but it is vital that you carry out all the instructions and treatments exactly. You must be as persistent in your treatment as the fleas will be at invading your pet and your home!

### Other allergies

The next most common type of skin condition is allergic skin disease where the pet develops an allergy to things like house dust mites or grass pollens that literally get under the pet's skin and set off a long standing allergic reaction called '**atopy**'. This is a very hard condition to deal with and an absolute cure may be impossible. However, with the right combination of treatments long-term relief is achievable – but once again, you must be prepared to be persistent. Your commitment is essential to success.

Other types of skin problems will require other commitments from you. For example if your pet has an allergy to certain things in its diet then we will work together with you to find out what these things are and take the necessary steps to make sure your pet avoids them.

### Shampooing your pet

Shampoo dogs in a bath, small dogs and cats in a sink. Try to have an assistant standing by. For cats, put a hand towel at the bottom of the bowl so that the cat can get its claws into something other than you!

Use luke warm water (hand temperature). Although a shower attachment might seem like a good idea, the water will be pressurised and liable to vary rapidly in temperature. Many dogs will love having the shower attachment on them, but for smaller breeds – and definitely for cats – jugs of water slowly poured will be much more successful. Prepare jugfuls before getting the animal in the water, and have them handy for rinsing. Pre-diluting the shampoo with an equal volume of water can also make it easier to cover all of your pet.

If the shampoo requires you to leave the lather for a period of time (eg five minutes) it is essential you do this – otherwise the whole fuss will have been for nothing. Get somebody to time you, or listen to a couple of songs on the radio to make sure you leave it on long enough.

**Finally, don't panic!** The calmer you are, the calmer your pet will be.



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*If you're not sure how to do it – phone us up – we'll talk you through it!*