

## Help for Cats with Dry Skin

**CatChannel veterinary expert, Arnold Plotnick, DVM, recommends a supplement rich in omega-3 fatty acids to treat dandruff or a keratolytic shampoo for flaky skin.**

*By Arnold Plotnick, DVM*

Posted: September 26, 2008

**Q:** I have a black and white female cat, approximately 8 years old, and she has developed very dry skin, and noticeable dandruff. I only feed her Iams dry cat food, usually a mixture of several flavors. Is she missing something in her diet? She also is pulling out some of her fur. Otherwise she is a pretty healthy cat.

**A:** There are a number of factors that contribute to dry skin and dandruff in cats. Cats fed a poor diet, such as a generic store brand, can sometimes have dry skin and a dull coat, although this clearly is not the case with your cat, as Iams is an excellent, premium diet.

Some cats develop dandruff, especially down the center of their back and around the base of the tail, simply because they are overweight and are unable to groom themselves properly. I see an increase in the number of cats with dandruff in my practice when the fall season arrives; the air becomes dryer, and some cats experience dry skin, in the same way that many people do. Seborrhea is another potential cause of dry flaky skin in cats, although this is much less common in cats than dogs.

Many cases of dandruff resolve when a fatty acid supplement rich in omega-3 fatty acids is given to cats on a daily basis. It may take four to six weeks to see results, however. Cats with very flaky skin might need to be bathed with a keratolytic shampoo — one that dissolves flakes. I'm sure your veterinarian can recommend a good one.