

My Cat Has a Rash

CatChannel veterinary expert Arnold Plotnick, DVM, discusses seasonal skin allergies and a variety of treatments.

By Arnold Plotnick, DVM

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Q: Last summer my cat pulled a lot of his back hair out because of a rash. This year there is less hair loss, but he will not let me touch the area. Sometimes I can manage to put a soothing liquid on him but he is very sore there. He still grooms himself, and eats and drinks normally. He is over 15, so I am concerned.

A: The fact that your cat had this same rash last year at the same time tells me that your cat has seasonal skin allergies, probably due to something that comes into bloom in your geographical region. Many cats get a circular red rash over their shoulder blades. They lose hair in this area, and the skin occasionally oozes some serum. Anti-inflammatory steroid drugs, such as prednisolone, often resolve the problem quickly, but other therapies should be attempted first, especially in an elderly cat like yours. Your veterinarian may initially prescribe antihistamines, omega-3 fatty acids, and perhaps a topical liquid or ointment. Cats vary in their response to these therapies. If the response is poor and your cat remains uncomfortable, you may eventually have to administer a short course of steroids to get the itching and inflammation under control.