

How Do I Cure My Cat's Dry Skin?

Find out different causes and solutions for dry skin in cats.

Q: My cat has really dry skin and sometimes he pulls his hair out. Is there anything I can do to help his dry skin? I already give him food that is specially formulated for sensitive skin and use a humidifier but neither seem to help much.

A: Good nutrition is important for cats to maintain a healthy, shiny coat. I would feed only a high-quality, name brand food and not a store brand or generic food.

Cats with dry skin might respond to an omega-3 fatty acid supplement added to their diet. Talk to your veterinarian about this. I've had excellent success in many cases using these supplements.

Bathing your cat too frequently can be a cause of dry skin, so only bathe your cat when it's truly necessary (i.e. if the hair coat is soiled with grease or dirt, etc.). If you do bathe your cat, use a conditioning rinse. The conditioner should be one specifically designed for cats and not for people. In addition, comb your cat often to remove loose hair and dandruff flakes.

While it is likely that what you describe is just dry skin, if your cat is itchy as well, (you didn't indicate in your letter whether he is) the dry skin might be a manifestation of an itchy skin disorder, such as allergies, parasites or a skin infection. Have your veterinarian examine your cat and make sure that it is just a case of dry skin.

Regards,
Arnold Plotnick, DVM