

## Vet's Corner



**Jessica Taylor, DVM**

volunteering in her church and the community, including with Feral Cat Adoption and Placement. In her rare free time, she loves spending time with her family, especially outdoors, running and reading.

Dr. Jessica Taylor completed her Bachelor of Science in Animal Science from North Carolina State University in 2000, and her Doctor of Veterinary Medicine from the North Carolina State University College of Veterinary Medicine in 2006.

As a member of Guilford Jamestown Veterinary Hospital, she is looking forward to helping owners strengthen the bonds with their pets through preventative care and education. Her special interests include cardiology, pain, arthritis management, and endocrine diseases such as diabetes. Dr. Taylor is a member of the American and North Carolina Veterinary Medical Associations.

Dr. Taylor lives with her husband, two beautiful daughters, a lazy hound dog, Indiana, and a very bossy, but adorable cat, Theo. She enjoys

skin as soon as you see it. Resist the urge to try any “home remedies” before an exam, as these can sometimes make the condition worse or trigger other problems that make finding the underlying cause difficult!

### Itchy, Itchy Allergies

It is spring, and in the South, that means pollen- and lots of it! While we sniffle and sneeze the days away, pollen and other allergens tend to make pets itchy. And when we say itchy, that can mean a lot of things. Pets can scratch with their feet, but chewing on the fur, licking the feet, or even shaking the ears or head are signs of itchiness. If you notice rust colored areas on your pet's feet or fur, this can be a sign that your fur friend is licking, sometimes when you are not looking. Our feline and canine companions can be allergic to grass, pollen, trees, mold, storage mites, and more. They can be allergic to ingredients in their food, often a protein they have been exposed to for many years. The problem often lies in the secondary infections that occur due to the licking and irritation.

If you see scabs, bumps that looks like pimples, or a moist area that has an odor, there is a good chance your pet has an infection. This bacteria or yeast can make your pet even itchier, and the itching will not go away until the infection is cleared. Often doctors use tests like skin scrapes, fungal tests, or cultures to determine what the problem may be. Thankfully, finding the right antibiotic and anti-itch medication can make a huge difference. Allergies can be difficult to dissect, but once managed, pets can live a much more comfortable life!

### Getting Rid of the “Dog Smell”!

Our pets get dirty and sometimes smelly. Bathing your pet can make them easier to live with, especially if they sleep in your bed! Bathing seems straightforward, but using the wrong products can make things worse. First, don't use people products! Even gentle products like baby shampoo are designed for people skin, not pet skin, and can dry out the oils that help protect your dog's and cat's coat. Flea and tick products can also be dangerous and potentially toxic to many dogs and especially cats. Additionally, the flea shampoos don't do anything for fleas once the bath is over, so don't bother! In general, mild, non-drying pet shampoos are good for routine bathing, but if your pet has a special condition, a medicated shampoo may be best, so ask your vet!

We share our lives with our pets- including our homes, our cars, and our beds. Snuggling up with your puppy or having your cat purring on your lap can make a bad day fade quickly. So, we want to be sure we can give those hugs as often as we want, and keeping your pet healthy includes the outside as well as inside.

## The Skin-ny on Your Pet's Skin

*Long hair, short hair, curly or straight—our pets come with all sorts of styles. Some breeds are even hairless! Regardless the type, your pet's skin and fur is the largest protective organ they have, and it is under constant assault. Keeping your pet's skin in top shape will go a long way in ensuring their comfort and good health.*

### Lumps and Bumps

You are petting your dog (or cat) and feel something on the skin that wasn't there yesterday. What to do now? Bumps can arise on or under the skin and can range from a mild problem to a symptom of a serious condition. First, try to part the hair to get a good look at the problem. Try to see if it is a tick or an object stuck to the skin. If so, gently remove it or seek help from your vet. If it is not something stuck, note the day that you first noticed it and call your veterinarian immediately if you are concerned or the area seems painful or uncomfortable to your pet. There are many types of masses, and some of them can be benign, or harmless. However, some types of skin masses can be cancerous and need to be removed. Your veterinarian may perform an aspirate (needle stick) or biopsy to determine if the mass needs to be addressed. It is always better to have something new checked out when the bump is small.

### Creepy Crawlies

The skin protects muscles, nerves, and organs. It can also be prime real estate for parasites, too! Fleas and ticks are a constant threat in the southeast, and these pests can cause serious reactions and infections. The best way to prevent infection is to prevent the parasite, and there are many oral and topical options available that provide great flea and tick control. Mites such as Demodex and Sarcoptes are another problem and can first show up as hair loss or severe itching. Some of these insects and mites can also affect people, so it is important to report any changes in the hair coat or

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