

Feline Acne



What is feline acne?

Feline acne is a common problem seen in cats. It is found on the cat's chin & lips. Often symptoms are so mild they go unnoticed. Acne can affect cats of any age, sex or breed.

Sebaceous glands secrete oils (sebum) which lubricates the skin, preventing dryness & irritation. The sebaceous glands are mostly found in dorsal, eyelids, and chin, surface of the base of the tail, lips, scrotum and prepuce. They are connected to the hair follicles.

The glands also play a role in territorial marking & any observant cat owner will have seen their cat rubbing its face & chin along objects. Over time this rubbing will leave greasy patches.

In acne, the follicles become blocked with black sebaceous material, causing blackheads. These blackheads may become irritated, swollen & infected, leading to pustules.

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What causes feline acne?

The exact cause of feline acne isn't known. There are several possible causes however including:

- Stress
- Plastic food bowls is commonly discouraged, especially in cats with feline acne. This is because they are porous & trap bacteria, which is then transferred to the cat's chin. It has also been suggested that an allergic reaction to the plastic food bowl is a cause.
- Poor grooming habits
- Over active sebaceous glands
- Food allergies

What are the symptoms of feline acne?



The chin & possibly lips have black spots (comedones) on it, which look like dirt.

Secondary infection may lead to swollen, red, pustules, leading to bleeding due to irritation.

As there are other conditions with similar symptoms to feline acne, it is important to take your cat to the veterinarian for a proper diagnosis & appropriate treatment.

How is feline acne treated?

Treatment of feline acne depends on the severity of the condition. Removing excess sebum is the aim.

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Some treatments include:

If the condition is mild: a few comedones, topical treatment may be all that is required or gentle cleansing with an antibiotic soap, hydrogen peroxide, iodine (Betadine) or Epsom salts.

Topical Vitamin A or Topical retinoids.



In more severe cases, cleansing the skin with an ointment or gel containing benzoyl peroxide (such as OxyDex) or chlorhexidine may be of use.

Topical glucocorticoids to reduce inflammation.

Severe acne:

- The fur around the chin may be clipped by your veterinarian to enable deep cleaning of the affected area.
- Oral antibiotics to treat infection.
- Oral glucocorticoids such as prednisone for severe inflammation.

Is there anything I can do to prevent feline acne?

- Switch from plastic to glass, ceramic or metal food bowls.
- Wash food & water bowls daily.
- Washing the cat's chin after eating, if it is prone to acne.

Always consult your veterinarian if you suspect feline acne. Never treat your cat at home with an anti-acne treatment designed for humans.

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