

Below you will see common symptoms for the itchy dog which leads to aggravation of the problem:

Scratching

Licking

Chewing

Biting



## Top tip!

(i) Ask your vet to check your dog's anal glands, even if there is no sign of a problem. This is a fast track way of removing toxins from the body which could aggravate skin problems.

(ii) Try to increase the amount of exercise your dog gets as this can use up excess calories and increase circulation which helps the body to discharge waste.

(iii) Want to try home cooking?  
See our page on Elimination diets:

[www.burnspet.co.uk/eliminationdiets.html](http://www.burnspet.co.uk/eliminationdiets.html)

## Support when you need it

Our **expert pet nutritionists** can give you straightforward and **individually tailored** advice on managing nutritional support for specific health problems or fine tuning feeding amounts.

John and the Nutrition Team



...they really know their stuff!



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Promotes excellent health,  
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- Itchy skin/ears/feet
- Upset digestion
- Poo eating
- Weight problems
- Bad breath
- Body odour
- Full anal glands
- Persistent moulting
- Behaviour problems
- Lack of vitality
- Stiffness
- Tear staining
- Fussy eating
- Tooth tartar

All of these may be diet related

This leaflet is part of a series on health and nutrition written by John Burns.

For more information please see my **Veterinary Guide to Natural Healthcare** booklet which can be downloaded from [www.burnspet.co.uk](http://www.burnspet.co.uk) or request a paper copy



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# THE VETERINARY GUIDE TO ITCHY SKIN

By **John Burns** BVMS MRCVS





**John Burns** BVMS MRCVS

The idea for **Burns Pet Nutrition** came while working as a Veterinary Surgeon in general practice during the early 90s. I noticed that many pets were suffering from the same ailments time and time again. Believing poor diet to be the primary cause, I recommended that clients feed their dogs home-cooked food to allow the body to function naturally, free from a build-up of toxic waste.

Of course, feeding home-cooked food is a time consuming business, and back in 1993 no brand of healthy pet food existed. This motivated me to develop my own **Original** dry food recipe based on chicken, brown rice and vegetables.

The concept was simple - a complete ready-made diet containing all the benefits of home cooked food.

25 years on, we have a diverse clientele of happy and healthy pets and our product range has evolved to include a number of high-quality diets for dogs, cats and rabbits.

*John Burns*  
Veterinary Surgeon **John Burns** BVMS MRCVS

## What causes itchy skin?

In my opinion, the most important cause of itchy skin is the **build-up of toxic waste** in the body.

Production of waste (toxins) is a normal part of the metabolic process but when this is excessive, due to poor quality food or overfeeding (even of high-quality food), these wastes accumulate and can interfere with normal healthy function. Itchy skin is often the first sign that things are going wrong in the pet's system.

You can read more about how **toxins damage** health in my **Veterinary Guide to Natural Healthcare** (pp. 4-6, *Development of Disease*).

**Food allergy/intolerance** should always be considered in cases of chronic or recurring skin disorders.

Dogs and cats are often diagnosed or suspected of being "allergic" to multiple food ingredients, grass, fleas, house mites, chemicals in the diet, furnishings and so on.

However, allergy testing is unreliable in that it often gives false positive results and will not detect food intolerance which produces the same symptoms as allergy but not via the immune system. You can read more in my **Veterinary Guide to Natural Healthcare** handbook (pp. 9-12).



## How can diet help?

Keeping things simple avoids the build-up of toxic waste in the system which, as mentioned above, can cause skin disorders.

Find a diet that uses **natural, wholesome foods, high in complex carbohydrates (especially wholegrains such as brown rice), low in protein and fat and free from additives** (other than essential vitamins and minerals).

You can read more in my **Veterinary Guide to Natural Healthcare** (pp. 26 - 27).

Food intolerances are also an issue for pets so avoiding problematic ingredients such as beef, wheat and dairy would be recommended, these account for over 70% of food intolerances in dogs. You can read more about **food allergy/intolerance** and how it affects the skin in my **Veterinary Guide to Natural Healthcare** (pp. 9-12).

**"Food allergy/intolerance should always be considered in cases of chronic or recurring skin disorders."** - John Burns

## What can cause dogs to have itchy skin?

- **Poor quality food**
- **Overfeeding**
- **Food intolerance**
- **Excess protein & fat**
- **Chemicals**



## How much food should I give?

Overfeeding contributes to the toxic burden so must be avoided. Recommended feeding amounts should be treated with caution as every dog is an individual with different needs from all others. Weighing the food each time is more accurate and effective than going by eye.

Many pet owners believe that they cannot be overfeeding as their pet is not overweight. Very often that is not correct; waste products can accumulate in the system of a dog which is of normal weight.

**The Burns Health and Nutrition Team** (see back of leaflet) can give you individually tailored advice on finding the right food and the right feeding amounts for your dog



**Or...**

See my **Daily Feeding Amounts** leaflet.

Download it from the Burns website: ([www.burnspet.co.uk](http://www.burnspet.co.uk)) or request a physical copy.

## Which food is best for my dog?

I find many owners stumble from brand to brand in the hope of coming across a food which will help their dog. For more difficult cases the **Burns Health & Nutrition Team** has the knowledge and experience to advise you on how a methodical process can help find the right food for your dog. For example, one dog may not be suited to chicken but may do well on duck. For another, a potato or maize based food may be more effective than a rice-based one.

## Can I still feed treats?

If your dog suffers from a problem such as itchy skin, it is best to avoid feeding treats while you determine what is causing the issue. During the elimination process it's important to stick to a straightforward diet that you can monitor, so avoid treats and table scraps (vegetables are OK). We understand this is tricky but it may only be a temporary measure until the issue is resolved.