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Monday, March 02, 2026

Assessment of Sasha Ryden

History

- Owned for approximately 8 years.
- Rescued from a prior abusive environment.
- Sterilised at Lucky Lucy.
- No chronic illnesses reported.
- Similar seasonal hair loss noted mid-to-late summer last year.
- Diet: Optimizer (approximately 1 year) plus cooked food including skins and leftovers.
- Previous parasite control: topical spray product (name unknown)
- Coconut oil and F10 spray applied by owner for skin.
- Vaccinations and microchip status not up to date.

Clinical Examination Findings

General Condition

- Habitus: 4+
- Slightly underweight (BCS 2/5)
- Hydration: Normal
- Temperature, pulse, respiration: Within normal limits
- Bright, alert but fearful of new people. Allowed examination with owner assistance
- Mild generalized lymphadenopathy, likely as a result of the dermatitis

Dermatological Findings

- Diffuse, symmetrical alopecia, most severe over dorsum and extending to hind limbs
- Lichenification of hind limbs
- Crusting and scabbing of skin, worse towards tail base
- Marked pruritus
- Distinct yeasty odour from skin
- Live fleas observed crawling on skin
- Early hair regrowth visible in some areas

Diagnostic Tests

- **Acetate tape preparation:** Large numbers of *Malassezia* organisms as well as cocci bacteria
- **Ear cytology:** Malassezia, cocci bacteria, and rod-shaped bacteria
- **Skin scrape for mange:** Negative

Otic Examination

- Bilateral otitis externa
- Right ear more severely affected
- Pain and sensitivity during examination
- Mixed yeast and bacterial infection confirmed cytologically

Clinical Assessment

Sasha is diagnosed with:

1. **Flea Allergy Dermatitis (FAD)**
Confirmed by presence of live fleas and distribution pattern of alopecia and pruritus (dorsum, tail base, hind limbs). Seasonal recurrence supportive of this diagnosis.
2. **Secondary Bacterial and Malassezia Dermatitis**
Confirmed via cytology.
3. **Bilateral Otitis Externa (Mixed Yeast and Bacterial Infection)**
Presence of rod-shaped bacteria indicates more advanced infection.
4. **Mild Weight Loss**
5. **Reactive Peripheral Lymphadenopathy**
Consistent with chronic inflammatory skin disease.

Welfare Assessment

At the time of examination:

- Sasha is not emaciated, but is underweight
- She is hydrated and systemically stable.
- No indication of systemic illness was found on physical exam, rather than severe, dermatological disease
- Skin disease is moderate to severe but treatable with appropriate management
- Live fleas were present at the time of examination.

The dermatological condition is consistent with untreated or inadequately controlled flea infestation leading to allergic dermatitis and secondary infection. The condition is uncomfortable and requires medical treatment but is reversible with appropriate care.

There is no evidence of intentional harm or non-accidental injury observed during this examination.



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Treatment Initiated

- **Prednisone** (tapering anti-inflammatory protocol)
- **Ranceph** (systemic antibiotic)

Owner instructed to:

- Clean ears with saline and Silbecor solution to reduce microbial load
- Institute effective systemic flea control (e.g., **Revolution, Frontline, Nexgard, Bravecto**)
- Treat all dogs in the household simultaneously
- Address environmental flea contamination (Karbust powder)

Due to financial constraints, referral to a welfare organisation such as the SPCA, AACL or PDSA was advised for continued care, ear-specific medication, vaccination updates, and ongoing parasite prevention. Owner was instructed to take dogs to be seen by a veterinarian at one of the above organisations after 2 weeks for additional treatment.

Prognosis

Prognosis is good, provided:

- Strict and ongoing flea control is implemented
- Full antibiotic course is completed
- Ear infections are properly managed
- Follow-up veterinary care is obtained

Failure to control fleas will result in recurrence of clinical signs.

Conclusion

Sasha was presented within the required 96-hour timeframe for veterinary evaluation. She is suffering from flea allergy dermatitis with secondary bacterial and yeast infections, as well as bilateral otitis externa. These conditions are medically manageable and reversible with appropriate treatment and parasite control.

At the time of examination, Sasha's condition, while uncomfortable, does not constitute irreversible neglect or life-threatening disease. Ongoing treatment and environmental parasite management are essential to ensure recovery and prevent recurrence.



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Assessment of Bully Ryden

Bully was assessed at the same time as Sasha. Findings were found to be similar to Sasha, but less severe. There was evidence of the diffuse, symmetrical, pruritic alopecia, with fleas being the suspected primary cause. There was only lichenification towards the hind feet, not towards the tail base. There was evidence of otitis externa as well.

Bully was also started on Ranceph and prednisone, with the same instructions given with regards to the ears, skin supplements, flea treatment, and follow up examinations.

Kind regards

Dr Tim Taylor (BVSc) Lic: D23/16039
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