

Cat's scratching may be allergies, or something more

Written by By Sam Mazzota King Syndicate
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DEAR PAW'S CORNER: My cat, Buster, has been scratching under his chin for days, and the skin underneath the fur there is getting raw. What is causing this, and how do I stop the scratching and treat the injured skin? — David G., Buffalo, New York

DEAR DAVID: It's clear that something is aggravating your cat and causing him to scratch in just one spot. The problem could be dry skin — not unusual for pets or humans in the middle of winter — or allergies. It may also be an infection, a parasite (mites or ringworm) or an allergic reaction to fleas.

If the area that Buster is scratching is not infected, you can try a few home remedies to try to relieve the itching. Oatmeal, cooked and then cooled, is one option. Plain yogurt is another. And coconut oil may help moisturize and protect the skin.

Dab one of these gently onto the itchy area. (Just a very thin coat; don't pile it on.) Repeat as needed.

If fleas are an issue, treat both your cat and your home to reduce and eliminate these little pests. Vacuum carpets thoroughly. Sweep all the corners and underneath furniture to remove dust bunnies, where fleas and their eggs can hide.

If these remedies don't work within a couple of days, or if your cat exhibits signs of infection or illness, contact the veterinarian. They need to take a look and see what exactly is causing the itching. They'll also have medication on hand to combat the itch (hydrocortisone, for one) and treat infection.

If Buster is scratching compulsively, they may put him into an E-collar (aka the "Cone of Shame") for a few days to let the spot heal fully.

Send your tips, comments or questions to ask@pawscorner.com.

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