

Cyclical Flank Alopecia (Seasonal flank alopecia, flank alopecia)

Cyclical flank alopecia is a condition of dogs resulting in hair loss. Dogs lose their hair (alopecia) and the skin becomes hyperpigmented around the flank areas. The cause has not been determined. Photoperiod or seasonal climatic changes may be involved as the condition can appear and then resolve with change of seasons. The condition can occur in any dog breed but the Boxer, English Bulldog, French Bulldog, Miniature Schnauzer, and Airedale Terrier are predisposed.

Cyclical flank alopecia may develop in the fall and winter with partial or complete resolution in the summer. Paradoxically, lesions may develop in the spring or summer with partial or complete resolution in the winter. There is no resolution of lesions with seasonal change in a few cases. This scenario is more likely to occur in areas of the world that do not have well-defined seasons.

Clinical lesions appear as bilateral, symmetrical areas of alopecia and hyperpigmentation in the flank areas. Lesions may also develop on the back, ribcage, and armpits. Affected areas have well-defined borders. Hair that re-grows may be lighter or darker in color as well as have a different texture.



Cyclical flank alopecia is diagnosed based on history, clinical findings, and ruling out other possible diagnoses.

The condition is generally not cured but control of symptoms is easily managed. The supplement melatonin is usually recommended to re-grow hair and is given for 4-6 weeks and then as needed. Owners may or may not choose treatment since the condition is only cosmetic.