

POST-CLIPPING ALOPECIA

AETIOLOGY AND PATHOGENESIS

Post-clipping alopecia results from failure of hair growth after the clipping. It is relatively common in dogs but rare in cats. The exact mechanism is unknown, but one theory is that decreased perfusion of hair follicles, secondary to vasoconstriction due to cooling of the skin by removal of the hair, may lead to premature termination of the growing phase. Alternatively, it may simply reflect a very long resting period before the next hair growth cycle. In Labradors, post-clipping re-growth takes 2.5-5 months (mean 3.7) and there is no relationship to the season the dogs are clipped in. Post-clipping alopecia can be an early sign of an endocrinopathy such as hypothyroidism or metabolic disorder.

CLINICAL FEATURES

Although post-clipping alopecia may occur in any breed, it occurs primarily in long-coated breeds, such as Siberian Huskies, Alaskan Malamutes, Samoyeds, Chow Chows and Keeshonds. Clinically, the hair does not re-grow after clipping for venipuncture, surgery, wound management, or summer grooming.

Occasionally, a few guard hairs will re-grow in the affected area. Hair growth generally resumes within 6-12 months but full re-growth can take 18-24 months.

DIFFERENTIAL DIAGNOSES

Iatrogenic or endogenous hyperadrenocorticism

Hypothyroidism or other endocrinopathy

Alopecia of follicular arrest (castration responsive dermatosis, growth-hormone responsive alopecia, 'alopecia X' etc.)

Telogen Effluvium and Anagen Defluxion

DIAGNOSTIC TESTS

The diagnosis is based on history and clinical findings as well as ruling out conditions in the differential diagnosis. Histopathologic findings on biopsy samples are supportive.



MANAGEMENT

There is no treatment that benefits this condition.

KEY POINT

A poorly understood condition.

With time hair will re-grow in most animals.