

Feline Chin Acne

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Feline chin acne is characterized by variable degrees of comedones, alopecia, erythema, swelling, draining tracts and crusting on the chin. The condition may or may not be pruritic. Chin acne can be particularly challenging to treat if the underlying cause is not identified. Dermatophytes, Demodex felis mites, allergies and keratinization disorders can all cause chin acne. Chin acne is frequently complicated by secondary bacterial infections (leading to furunculosis of hair follicles and pain).

An initial diagnostic work up of chin acne may include a fungal culture, a deep skin scraping, and an impression smear. The signalment, history and physical exam can also provide clues for a diagnosis.

Demodex mites are easy to find on deep skin scrapings. Treatment of Demodex felis in cats should be directed at finding underlying systemic illness such as feline leukemia.

Dermatophytosis is diagnosed based on fungal culture or trichogram. The clinician's index of suspicion for dermatophytosis should increase if other parts of the body are affected, the cat is young, and if other people or pets in the home are affected.

Allergies are diagnosed by ruling out demodicosis and dermatophytosis. Other clues include pruritus of the chin and other areas of the body. The history, signalment and response to steroids are also helpful for diagnosing allergies.

Keratinization disorders are not pruritic (unless secondarily infected) and generally occur in younger cats. This is also a diagnosis of exclusion.

Both allergies and keratinization disorders are conditions that are not cured, but controlled by continuous treatment. Treatment options for allergies include: steroids (topical and/or systemic), Atopica or a hypoallergenic diet.

Keratinization disorders can be treated with vitamin A or retinoids (in more severe cases) and phytosphingosine-containing products (Douxo).

Secondary infections can be treated with mupirocin or gentamicin/betamethasone ointment. Deep or extensive infections may require oral antibiotics.

Feline chin acne can be mild to severe, and treatment requirements can range from benign neglect to daily treatments.