

Acral Lick Granuloma in Dogs

Overview/Symptoms

An acral lick granuloma or, more simply, acral lick, is a raised, ulcerated lesion of the skin and underlying soft tissue. It is frequently the result of incessant licking in one area of the body; quite often, the front legs.

This is a common problem for dogs, and the cause varies. Acral licks can occur secondarily to allergies, injury, [arthritis](#), infection, or certain stresses—even boredom. Unfortunately, the ulcerated lesion is also itchy, so your dog will continue to lick it, not allowing the wound to heal.

Diagnosis/Treatment

Acral lick granulomas can be tricky to treat and, regrettably, there is no single, universal cure. The first step in helping your pet to stop licking is to identify the reason why he or she wants to lick in the first place. There are several diagnostic tests that could be helpful, depending on your pet's specific history. Your veterinarian may want to rule out conditions such as [fungal](#) or bacterial infection, and may seek to learn if the acral lick is the result of a behavioral issue.

Once an underlying cause has been identified, your veterinarian will recommend a treatment plan that is right for your dog. Treatment can include antibiotics, topical medications to reduce the itch and keep your dog from licking himself, and behavioral modification. Other treatments, such as acupuncture, have also been successful.

Because acral licks are tricky to treat, you will need to work closely with your veterinarian to identify the best treatment for your dog. Every situation is different, so you may have to take several approaches before you identify what works best for your unique pet.

Prevention

Prevention really depends on the root cause of your dog's licking. Talk to your veterinarian immediately if you notice your pet has been obsessively licking. The key to a speedy recovery is to identify the cause and help your best friend as quickly as possible before the lesion becomes infected and the licking becomes habit-forming.

If you have any questions or concerns, you should always visit or call your veterinarian – they are your

best resource to ensure the health and well-being of your pets.