

Myiasis (Maggots) in Pets

Overview

Myiasis is a fancy medical term for a really gross condition: an infestation of maggots. Flies reproduce by laying eggs, which hatch and release maggots. Pets, especially those confined outside or who are weak and debilitated, are particularly susceptible. Any type of draining wound or moist coat soaked with feces or urine can become the perfect spot for flies to lay their eggs. When the eggs hatch, maggots will begin to feast on any dead or dying tissue. Sometimes they will even begin to eat the healthy tissue.

Diagnosis and Treatment

Myiasis is diagnosed by the presence of maggots on the skin, in the coat, or in the wound of the dog or cat. Treatment consists of shaving the hair and removing in maggots, topical wound treatment and usually several weeks of oral antibiotic therapy. Some types of myiasis, such as a [Cuterebra infestation](#), requires surgical removal of maggots. Once the maggots are removed, the underlying skin infection or other cause of infestation should be treated.

Prevention

The best way to prevent your pet from becoming a home for maggots is to make sure that any wounds are kept clean and that underlying skin problems are treated. Because weak and debilitated pets are more susceptible, it is important to keep them inside as much as possible and to make sure to check their coats frequently for urine and/or feces. Any urine and feces should be washed off of your pet's coat daily.

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.