

Alopecia in Cats
ALTERNATIVE VETERINARY MEDICINE CENTRE

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ALOPECIA (HAIR LOSS) IN CATS

Some cats have an unfortunate tendency to pull out their fur. In some, this can be seen as a balding underbelly and thighs but, in others, it can present as a thinning or even loss of the coat, over most of the cat. An even worse manifestation of a related syndrome, is the appearance of scabs with baldness. This latter state is often called 'miliary dermatitis'.

One of the questions to resolve is whether there is a primary problem of hair-pulling or over-grooming (which may be a behavioural-come-hormonal problem) or a primary constitutional problem of excess shedding of the coat, resulting in excess grooming.

The situation is further complicated by the fact that the problem may be seasonal. If one embarks on a treatment, it may appear successful when, in fact, the condition may temporarily have subsided as a result of changing seasons. This phenomenon can make assessment of therapy very challenging.

In my opinion, these conditions all have a greater or lesser hormonal component. This is in part, I believe, one of the consequences of neutering and can affect males or females. Neutering causes fewer problems in cats than in dogs but hair loss problems of this nature are quite common.

Almost all such cases used to be given a hormone tablet, as a routine. This has, happily, fallen out of fashion, as it commonly gave rise to temperament and [obesity](#) problems. Some cats even developed cancer, in response. The drug was widely used, despite these unfortunate consequences. Steroid (cortisone) is given to some cats nowadays but that type of drug may also cause serious side-effects and obesity.

Flea allergy is often cited as the cause for this problem. However, we have many patients showing such signs with no evidence of fleas.

I recommend a fresh, [natural diet](#). The food our animals eat is just as much the raw material for health for them as ours is for us. It can be a challenge, however, to persuade a few (usually mature) cats to come off manufactured onto fresh foods and, in extreme cases, it can prove virtually impossible. These cases may be slower to respond to therapy, as a result. The essential fatty acids (Omega 3 and Omega 6) are important components of a healthy diet and are found abundantly in fish oils and star flower oil. These compounds have particular significance in skin and in hormonal problems.

[Homeopathy](#), with a healthy diet, usually provides a very successful therapy for cats who display hair or skin problems. The homeopathic constitutional approach is the mainstay of therapy, stimulating a reversion to more normal hormonal and immune balance in successful cases (it is not, however, possible to restore full hormonal balance to a neutered cat). The constitutional approach involves selecting a homeopathic medicine to suit the individual character, build, symptoms and lifestyle of the patient. This approach can be supported by use of a glandular 'sarcode', which is a medicine that has been prepared from glandular tissue, by the homeopathic method.

Common homeopathic constitutional medicines, given in this context, are: *Arsenicum*, *Natrum muriaticum*, *Pulsatilla*, *Sepia*, *Sulphur*. They are selected according to the cat's personality, build, behaviour and signs/symptoms. Other homeopathic medicines may be more suitable to a given patient with this condition, as homeopathy is prescribed according to the individual patient, rather than according to the disease name.

In a few cases, one course of treatment may solve the problem. More commonly, prolonged or repetitive courses of treatment may be necessary to control symptoms. Either way, there is a very real chance that your cat's natural beauty can be restored, by the use of homeopathy and, if possible, diet alterations ([natural diet](#)).

Christopher Day – January 2001

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