

Wessex Veterinary Orthopaedics

Independent Veterinary Referral Service for
Orthopaedics, Spinal Surgery & Dermatology

Acral Lick Granuloma

An acral lick granuloma is a skin lesion caused by repetitive licking and chewing, typically affecting the lower limbs and paws. The affected area becomes hairless and thickened, and may develop into an ulcerated lesion with possible deep infection. If the condition is not resolved early, chronic changes to the skin can develop.

The underlying trigger for the initial licking behaviour may include one or a combination of the following:

- **Allergies** and associated itching
- **Joint pain** or other sources of discomfort
- **Injury or neurological conditions** that cause abnormal sensations or itching
- **Behavioural disorders**, particularly anxiety

Prolonged licking may also stimulate the release of chemicals called endorphins in the brain, potentially leading to an addictive behavioural pattern.

How is an acral lick granuloma treated?

Successful management of an acral lick granuloma involves several steps. Referral to a veterinary dermatologist is often the first step in treating the lesions and may also involve referral to a veterinary behaviour specialist.

Initial treatment focuses on addressing the deep infection associated with the lesion. This can be complex, and depending on how long the lesion has been present, additional treatments may be required to restore the skin to a normal condition and prevent the area from continuing to attract licking and chewing.

Deep infections can be complicated and often require four to six weeks of antibiotics. In some cases, a biopsy and deep tissue culture may also be necessary.

It is then essential to address the underlying trigger to prevent recurrence. This may involve treating the allergy with an allergy vaccine, implementing behavioural treatment, or addressing other possible causes, as outlined above.

Acral lick granulomas can be a frustrating and complicated condition to resolve. However, with referral to a specialist dermatologist, the prognosis is good.

340 Poole Road, Branksome, Poole, Dorset, BH12 1AW

call 01202 022994

enquiries@wessexvetortho.com

wessexvetortho.com