



Always consult with a veterinarian that you feel comfortable with before diagnosing or treating any disease on your own. This information is for reference only.

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Discoid Lupus Erythematosus

Issue Description

Discoid Lupus Erythematosus (DLE) is a skin condition of dogs that typically causes a loss of color (discoloration) on the hairless part of the nose. A black nose may fade to gray or pink. The discoloration can be accompanied by ulcers and bleeding. The surrounding skin may also be effected.

Other Names

Canine Discoid Lupus Erythematosus, DLE, Collie Nose

Commonly Affected Breeds

- Collie
- German Shepherd Dog
- Shetland Sheepdog
- Siberian Husky
- Brittany Spaniel
- German Shorthaired Pointer

Symptoms

The most common initial symptom is scaling and loss of pigment on the nose. This is found in up to 90 percent of dogs. The surface of the nose becomes smooth gray, and ulcerated, instead of the normal black cobblestone texture. Over time the lips, the skin around the eyes, the ears, and the genitals may become involved. Lesions may progress to ulceration and lead to tissue destruction. DLE is often worse in summer due to increased sun exposure.

Diagnosis

DLE is easily confused with solar dermatitis, pemphigus, ringworm, and other types of dermatitis. Biopsy is required to make the distinction. Histopathologically, there is inflammation at the dermoepidermal junction and degeneration of the basal cell layer. Unlike in SLE, an anti-nuclear antibody test is usually negative.

Treatment

Avoiding sun exposure and the use of sunscreens (not containing zinc oxide, which is toxic to dogs) is important. Topical therapy includes corticosteroid use. Oral vitamin E or omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids are also used. More refractory cases may require the use of oral niacinamide and tetracycline, corticosteroids, azathioprine, or chlorambucil. Treatment is often lifelong, but there is a good prognosis for longterm remission.

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