

# A FAD To Avoid This Season

*Liz Boles*



Flea allergy dermatitis (FAD) is one of the most common skin conditions encountered in the grooming salon. It is caused by an allergic reaction to the saliva delivered with a flea's bite. The symptoms include frequent scratching and biting at the affected areas, hair loss at the affected areas, and red, raised bumps called papules. Scratching at these crusty, weepy lesions can lead to more severe secondary infections. Additionally, live fleas and flea dirt may be seen, although some cats can react to only one fleabite, making finding fleas and flea dirt on lightly infested cats more difficult.



The treatment process for flea allergy dermatitis can begin in your grooming salon. In the case of the cat pictured at the above left, a lion cut removed his severely matted coat and exposed the FAD hiding beneath.

Next, he received a thorough bath with a degreasing shampoo, a flea shampoo, and lastly a soothing, medicated shampoo to relieve his skin's irritation. (left)



Though it will take time and follow-up treatment for complete healing, his skin was greatly improved from its condition just one hour ago. (left)

As with any medical concern, the groomer should notify the client of the suspected FAD and recommend examination by a veterinarian in the event that a secondary infection requires further treatment. It is also important that the client treat their cat with a topical flea product following the manufacturer's instructions in addition to eliminating fleas from their home. The best treatment for flea allergy dermatitis is prevention, and that means avoiding exposure to fleabites entirely.



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