

MALASSEZIA OVERGROWTH

WHAT IS MALASSEZIA OVERGROWTH ?

Malassezia spp. is a yeast normally found on the skin of dogs and cats. In healthy dogs and cats the presence of this yeast on the skin is very small and distributed in particular locations (chin, lips, perianal area, ear canals).

THE CAUSES

There are several causes that allow the yeast to multiply excessively and cause discomfort to the animal and Malassezia overgrowth can develop on the skin or in the ear canals.

As this yeast is a microorganism whose growth is promoted by the increase the environmental humidity, temperature and sebum quantity and quality, its proliferation is strongly favored by all diseases that induce inflammation and increased production of sebum or cerumen, such as allergic diseases or hormonal imbalances, or by particular conformations anatomical, such as the presence of skin folds or the pendulous shape of the pinnae.

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE

The main symptom of Malassezia dermatitis is itching, accompanied by redness, flaking, greasy and malodorous skin. The areas most commonly affected are the ventral part of the neck, the skin folds, the groins and interdigital spaces. Sometimes flakes and waxy material around the base of the nail and a reddish/brownish discoloration of the nail can be observed.

The main features of Malassezia otitis are ear itching, a profuse ceruminous exudate and foul odor.

DIAGNOSIS

The diagnosis of Malassezia overgrowth is made by cytologic examination of specimens obtained either from the skin or from cerumen by microscopic detection of high numbers of yeasts.