Lick Granuloma

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Overview

Lick granuloma is a common condition observed in large, active dogs in which the dog licks an area excessively, usually on the front leg, until a raised, firm ulcerated lesion is formed. These lesions are prone to infections, which make them itchier and itchier, which then leads to a self-perpetuating cycle of itching and licking.

Many underlying diseases are responsible for this condition. It could be caused by psychological and behavioral factor or by skin and internal diseases. Allergies, endocrine disease, parasitic, bacterial and fungal diseases may cause lick granulomas. Interestingly, allergy to flea bites may also be a cause. Aggressive flea control is recommended in flea-sensitive individuals. In other cases, a change in the environment, a stressful situation or a change in the work schedule of the owner could be the trigger.

Sometimes the granuloma occurs in an area of a previous trauma like a fracture and that may be triggered by an abnormal sensation in the skin. In other cases, the excessive licking may be a sign of pain. Arthritis may be evident in the underlying joint.

Diagnosis and Treatment Notes:

- Lick granuloma is generally diagnosed by history and physical examination findings. Skin scrapings, biopsies and cultures may be recommended to help determine the underlying cause.

- Treatment depends on the severity of the disease, your individual pet, and your veterinarian. For suspected behavioral problems, anti-anxiety or other behavior modification medications may be prescribed. Long term antibiotics and discouraging licking are important. Some pets benefit from Elizabethan collars. Discuss treatment details when your pet is diagnosed with this condition.

What to Watch for*:

- Skin lumps with ulcerations
- Excessive licking of the same area

Please notify us if you notice any of the above signs or if you have any questions!