What are the commonly diagnosed canine skin disorders?

It can be one or more of the following:

- Allergy (flea-bite hypersensitivity, atopic dermatitis);
- Mites, ticks, fleas, and worms (parasitic dermatoses);
- Pus-containing skin infection (bacterial pyoderma);
- Skin cancer (cutaneous neoplasms);
- Oily or dry, flaky skin (seborrhea);
- Food allergy (food hypersensitivity / food intolerance);
- Pruritus (itchy or unpleasant sensation of the skin).

What are the skin disorders that are affected by nutritional deficiency?

Changes that raise the suspicion for nutritional deficiency include:

- A sparse, dull, dry and brittle coat with hairs that epilate easily
- Slow hair growth or regrowth from areas that have been clipped

What are the risk factors for nutritionally related skin disease?

Genotype, lifestage, food type and food supplementation are risk factors for nutritionally related skin disease.

What are the key nutritional factors for foods and supplements for dogs with nutrient-responsive dermatoses?

Protein and Fat: Needed for the development of new hair and skin; fat is the most concentrated source of dietary energy. For normal skin and hair, it is important for the dog’s food to provide optimal protein quantity, quality (appropriate levels of essential amino acids) and digestibility.

Essential Fatty Acids (EFA): A source of energy for the skin, which is seen as supplements to improve the sheen and luster of hair. In this case, Omega-3 fatty acids would help to maintain a low inflammatory level while Omega-6 fatty acids increase the glossiness of the hair, coat and smoothness of the dog’s skin.

Zinc and Copper: Zinc is important for healthy skin, for an efficient immune system, and for competent taste buds while copper is necessary in production of melanin, the pigment that colours coat and skin, and is linked with iron metabolism.

Vitamin A, E and B-Complex: Vitamin A is required for the maintenance of healthy skin, which could avoid hair loss, poor coat, scaly skin and an increased susceptibility to secondary bacterial skin infections. A supplement of vitamin E, on the other hand, strengthens tissues and provides an anti-inflammatory effect on some dog skin disorders i.e. reducing the redness and itchiness due to allergies. Likewise, B-Complex vitamin is good for dog allergies, infections and even stress; this helps with energy, growth and the immune system.