

Skin & Coat Supplement

Frequently Asked Questions



Why are skin and coat supplements beneficial for my pet?

Many pets do not receive the required nutrition to maintain healthy skin and haircoat, or they have higher needs for certain nutrients than the average dog. [Skin and coat supplements](#) provide the cells of the skin with the necessary nutrients to remain healthy. Many skin and coat supplements contain fatty acids, vitamins, and minerals to help target skin and coat disorders, shedding, and allergies, leaving a beautiful, shiny coat, healthy skin, and relief from dander and itching.

What are fatty acids?

Fatty acids are specific types of polyunsaturated fats. The two main classes of fatty acids related to skin and coat are the Omega-3s and the Omega-6s. These classifications are based on molecular characteristics.

Which fatty acids do pets need?

Animals can produce some of the fatty acids they need, but not all of them. Those fatty acids that they cannot produce themselves, but must be obtained through their diet, are called "essential" fatty acids. Interestingly, what is "essential" for one species of animal is not necessarily essential for another. For example, the fatty acid arachidonic acid is essential for cats but not for dogs.

In some disease conditions, certain enzymes, which convert one fatty acid to another, may be deficient, or the animal may not be able to adequately absorb fatty acids from the intestine. In animals with these conditions, some of the "nonessential" fatty acids actually become "essential," that is, required in the diet, and in higher amounts. Deficiencies of fatty acids may also occur with the use of fat-restricted diets in overweight dogs.

How do fatty acids affect my pet's skin and haircoat?

Haircoats, which are dull, brittle, and dry, often respond to supplementation with certain Omega-3 and Omega-6 fatty acids. Dogs with allergies often benefit from supplements containing higher levels of Omega-3 fatty acids.

For what conditions are Omega-3 fatty acids recommended?

Research has shown that the Omega-3 fatty acids called EPA and DHA appear to have the most benefit for inflammatory conditions such as allergies. There is some evidence that Omega-3 fatty acids are also helpful for some types of arthritis. Pets with other inflammatory conditions, certain kidney diseases, and some cancers may also benefit from Omega-3 supplementation. Discuss these possibilities with your veterinarian.

Why are low-fat diets recommended for pets being supplemented with Omega-3 fatty acids?

Omega-3 supplements will work best when given with a low-fat diet so we can improve the ratio of Omega-6 fatty acids to Omega-3 fatty acids. The diet normally contains large amounts of Omega-6 fatty acids and lesser amounts of Omega-3s. By adding Omega-3s via a supplement and decreasing the amount of dietary Omega-6s, a better ratio of the two can be obtained.

How long does it take for skin and coat supplements to work?

You may sometimes see results in as few as two to three weeks. However, it often takes as long as 12 weeks to determine whether the supplementation is working.

Can I use skin and coat supplements with other medications if my pet has health problems?

Although you should always ask your veterinarian first, in most cases [skin and coat supplements](#) are okay to use with other medications. If your pet is being treated for any medical condition, always check with your veterinarian before using any type of supplements.

Are there any side effects from skin and coat supplements?

In large doses, they may cause some loose stool. If that occurs, stop and start again with a very low dose and gradually increase the dose so your pet will get used to it.

Which skin and coat care supplement is best for my pet?

The form you choose for your pet is best determined by a few factors. Choose a supplement that will target your pet's specific needs.

If your pet has a dry, brittle haircoat, you may choose one of the following to supply Omega-3 and Omega-6 fatty acids:

[Vitacoat® Plus](#)
[Skin and Coat Tabs](#)
[Derm Caps](#)

If your pet has allergies, we recommend one of the following:

[Maximum Relief Allergy Kit](#)
[Omega-3 Gel Caps](#)
[3V Caps](#)
[Allergy Tabs](#)
[Vitacaps®](#) (mild allergies)
[Allergy Relief Kit](#) (mild allergies)

How do the Omega-3 Gel Caps compare to Vitacaps® and Vitacoat® Plus?

[Omega-3 Gel Caps](#) have much higher concentrations of Omega-3 fatty acids, and no Omega-6 fatty acids. They are the best supplement for allergies.

If I am using Vitacaps®, should I switch to the Omega-3 Gel Caps or the Allergy Tabs?

If your pet has mild signs of allergies and is responding well to the [Vitacaps®](#), you can continue to use them. If your dog has more severe allergies, you may want to switch to the [Omega-3 Gel Caps](#). You may add the

Allergy Tabs if your pet needs faster relief or has very severe symptoms.

What is the difference between the Maximum Relief Allergy Kit and the regular Allergy Kit?

The Maximum Relief Allergy Kit is a combination of oral supplements for dogs with moderate to severe allergies. The regular allergy kit contains oral supplements as well as shampoo. The Itch Stop or Oatmeal shampoos are recommended for dogs with allergies.

What are the functions of the ingredients in the Allergy Tabs?

Ingredient	Function
Vitamin C	Antioxidant to protect the skin from free radicals; has some antihistamine activity
Quercetin	Bioflavonoid which reduces inflammation, is an antioxidant, and inhibits release of histamines and other inflammatory products from cells
Grape seed extract	Antioxidant to protect the skin from free radicals; reduces inflammation
Bromelain	For pain and inflammation, enhances the activity of quercetin
Biotin	Vitamin essential for healthy skin and coat
<i>Lactobacillus casei</i>	Probiotic - probiotics are "good bacteria" that modulate immune function via the digestive tract and may have a useful role in atopy (allergies to airborne substances)

What are the functions of the ingredients in the Skin and Coat Tabs?

Ingredient	Function
Vitamin C	Antioxidant to protect the skin from free radicals; has some antihistamine activity
Vitamin E	Vitamin necessary for skin and coat health; is an antioxidant that also preserves fish oil
Zinc	Antioxidant and necessary for skin and coat health
Fish Oil	Best source of the Omega-3 fatty acids EPA and DHA*
Borage oil	Excellent source of gamma linolenic acid (GLA), an Omega-6 fatty acid*
Evening primrose oil	Excellent source of GLA, an Omega-6 fatty acid*
Flaxseed oil	A source of alpha-linolenic (LNA) acid, an Omega-3 fatty acid*
Safflower oil	Excellent source of Omega-6 fatty acids*
* Omega-3 and Omega-6 fatty acids are necessary for skin and coat health	