

Veterinary Allergy & Skin Center  
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## **The Importance of Re-examination**

### *My pet is all better now is a Recheck really necessary?*

While your pet's hair may be growing back, their scratching improved and the sores less noticeable, the infection is likely not 100% resolved. It is necessary for the infection to be absolutely resolved 1-2 weeks BEFORE your pet finishes taking their antibiotic medication. Be certain to continue giving your pet antibiotics UNTIL our Doctor tells you to stop. If we don't re-examine your pet's skin BEFORE you run out of antibiotic, when you call us later as the infection becomes noticeable again, we won't know if the infection is recurrent, resistant, or an exacerbation of the initial infection. Without confirmation of healing, 99% of the time the infection (and the itch) will come back quickly once antibiotics "run out".

### *But I looked at my pet's skin and I think it's healed.*

Because of the nature of an animal's hair coat (it's meant to cover the skin), dim household lighting, and an inability to thoroughly examine the entire skin surface up close, it is almost impossible for the casual observer to identify the very subtle signs of infection. It is not uncommon for subtle clues of infection to be noted in the exam room under proper lighting and restraint of the patient where none were noted at home.

### *Why must I medicate my pet for so long?*

Antibiotic therapy needs to be continued until we "Leave no Trace" of infection. The skin and hair need time to re-establish their defense against Staph infection, especially if it is already recurrent OR when there are hairs broken and trapped deep under the skin. It is important that someone trained to analyze the skin decide when it is safe to discontinue antibiotic therapy.

### *I don't like to give my pet medications more than absolutely necessary.*

Neither do we! But it is absolutely necessary to rid your pet's body of an infection before stopping antibiotics or other prescribed medications unless your pet is having a physical reaction to them.

### *I think I'd just like to treat with antibiotics for a week or two.*

Unfortunately, we are seeing more resistant skin (and ear) infections and short-term treatment may be one of the reasons why. Treating resistant infections becomes costly - often requiring multiple cultures, using increasingly expensive antibiotics with more side effects, and taking even longer treatment periods to clear.

While cancelling your pet's recheck appointment (or not making one) will save you time and money in the short term, it actually costs more in the long term-- often delaying a proper diagnosis and interrupting a potentially successful treatment plan.