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## **Body Wipe Downs and Foot Soaks**

A common problem for many dogs is excessive scratching of the skin along with licking and chewing of their paws. There are many reasons dogs do these actions but there is one simple therapy to keep their skin and feet clean and disinfected – irrigation!

Dogs are like “swifter’s” picking up allergens, bacteria, fungus, and chemicals on their body and paws as they walk and lay around. They accumulate these irritants which can lead to excessive habits of scratching, licking and chewing; most of the time they are simply trying to remove the irritants which unfortunately often leads to more problems. As they over-groom, the non-sterile saliva adds moisture and warmth which often leads to the perfect environment for infection to occur.

This simple therapy involves irrigation and disinfecting of the skin and paws through rinsing away the contaminants. By removing the contact allergens and irritants daily (and sometimes several times a day) you radically reduce the number of irritants in contact with their skin. Now, your dog does not need to remove the containments by licking because you already have.

Irrigation involves flushing the affected areas. You can simply use lukewarm running water or a tub to soak the feet (making sure to get in-between the pads) for a minimum of a minute or you can use an anti-microbial/water mixture to disinfect the skin.

To disinfect the skin we suggest using povadone iodine (also called Betadine) or chlorahexaderm (also called Nolvasan) both diluted with water.

Dilute concentrated Betadine with water to a light ice tea color (or Nolvasan with water to light blue color) and make a foot soak in a kitchen snick, bowel, Tupperware tub, or kiddy swimming pool. Place your dog in the foot bath for 1-5 minutes (remembering to irrigate in-between their toes). When finished pat dry their feet (no need to rise off). You can also use the mixture and apply to the skin with a washcloth to perform body wipe down/baths.

If your dog has excessive habits, infections, and/or allergies this irrigation therapy should be done at least daily, preferably after all trips outside are completed. If you are just trying to be proactive and prevent licking along with containment ingestion you should perform these therapies several times a week.

Note: For white or light haired dogs: use Nolvasan to prevent hair staining.