

Feline Acne: Signs, Diagnosis, and Treatment of Chin 'Blackheads' in Cats

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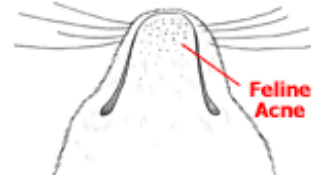
Feline acne is a condition in which comedones (blackheads) develop on the chin of a cat.

What causes feline acne?

The exact cause of feline acne is not known, but several factors appear to be associated with its development including stress, a suppressed immune system, poor grooming habits, the presence of other diseases, [contact](#) or [atopic dermatitis](#), and skin conditions in which abnormal amounts of oils are produced and the hair follicles do not function properly.

What are the signs of feline acne?

Multiple comedones form on the chin and lips of the cat, and the chin may appear "dirty." The comedones can develop into small abscesses, which break open and form crusts. In severe cases, draining tracts, hair loss, and swelling may develop on the chin. It may be itchy and cause the cat to scratch, which can lead to even more trauma to the area. Secondary bacterial infections can develop. The condition may appear only once in the life of a cat, it may come and go, or may remain for the life of the cat. In Persian cats, the condition may also affect the face and skin folds.



Feline acne occurs equally in male and female cats, and in cats of all ages and breeds.

How is feline acne diagnosed?

Skin scrapings may be performed to rule out other causes of similar lesions such as [demodicosis](#), [Malassezia \(yeast\) infections](#), allergies, [ringworm](#), and a condition called [eosinophilic granuloma complex](#). A skin biopsy may also be performed to rule out these conditions. A [culture and sensitivity](#) may be performed if a secondary bacterial infection is suspected.

How is feline acne treated?

Feline acne can be controlled, but is not really "cured." Very mild cases of feline acne in which there are no symptoms may not be treated. In other cases, antiseborrheic shampoos, such as those containing benzoyl peroxide (at a concentration of 3% or less), or benzoyl peroxide gels are used to break down the excess oils. [Supplementation with fatty acids](#) may be beneficial. Oral or topical antibiotics, such as mupirocin, may be used if there is a secondary bacterial infection. If there is a large amount of inflammation, a short course of [corticosteroids](#), such as prednisolone may be given.

Any underlying conditions such as ringworm, a *Demodex* infestation, or a yeast infection should be treated appropriately.

It may be helpful to switch food and water dishes to a stainless steel or glass variety in the event an allergic reaction may be a contributing factor (cats can be allergic to plastics and dyes). Using a very shallow dish can also be helpful. Owners should regularly clean the chins of cats who are prone to the development of feline acne and/or have poor grooming habits.