Dogs and cats can develop small bumps (papules) or larger lumps (nodules) on their skin. The term 'tumor' means an abnormal growth or swelling, and is often used to designate cancer. Often, the word 'tumor' also brings the word 'cancer' to mind. There are, however, many other causes of lumps and bumps. The following table includes most of the conditions which result in solid lumps and bumps. The list is rather extensive, so you can understand why a quick diagnosis may be difficult to make and various diagnostic tests, such as biopsies, may need to be performed. The most common causes of solid lumps and bumps are color-coded gray in the table (some may be more common in certain geographical areas).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Symptoms</th>
<th>Diagnosis</th>
<th>Treatment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abscesses</td>
<td>Accumulation of pus; may or may not be caused by an infection; in cats, often due to bite wounds</td>
<td>These may appear as firm or fluid-filled nodules of varying shapes and sizes; if due to infection, the animal may have fever, loss of appetite, and depression; may open and drain</td>
<td>History, physical exam, needle aspirate</td>
<td>Surgically open, drain and flush; if infected, administer appropriate antibiotics</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acral lick dermatitis (neurodermatitis)</td>
<td>Self-licking in dogs results in self-trauma; possible causes include anxiety, boredom, stress (e.g., new member in household); licking can develop into an obsessive behavior</td>
<td>Red, hairless, well-circumscribed, sometimes raised lesion usually on leg; if chronic, will drain</td>
<td>Exclude other causes; history important</td>
<td>Relieve underlying cause e.g., anxiety; restrict licking, e.g., Elizabethan collar; behavior modifying medication may be necessary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Allergic and irritant contact dermatitis</td>
<td>An allergic reaction following exposure to antibiotics applied to the skin; metals such as nickel; materials such as rubber, wool, and plastic; and chemicals such as dyes and</td>
<td>Red skin and small bumps or blisters on the areas of skin that are sparsely haired and directly exposed to the offending substance; itching; hair loss in chronic conditions</td>
<td>Patch test, exclusion trials</td>
<td>Restrict exposure to the allergen or contact irritant in the dog's environment; steroids, antihistamines</td>
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as dyes and carpet deodorizers; or inflammation caused by irritating substances such as poison ivy. Generally requires multiple exposures.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Diagnosis/Management</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Apocrine sweat gland cyst</strong></td>
<td>Common Single, round, smooth nodules with no hair; may appear bluish; usually filled with a watery liquid; most common on head, neck, and limbs</td>
<td>Physical exam; biopsy; Surgical removal is optional</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Basal cell tumors</strong></td>
<td>Cancerous, slow-growing tumor which rarely metastasizes; seen in older dogs</td>
<td>Single, sometimes fluid-filled nodules, which may ulcerate; usually on the head, neck, and chest; may be hyperpigmented</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Bee, wasp, hornet stings</strong></td>
<td>Skin reactions can vary dramatically in severity</td>
<td>Immediately after the bite, see swelling, redness, pain, possibly itching; subsequently may develop extensive ulcers with draining; may develop hives or anaphylaxis</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Benign tumors</strong></td>
<td>See specific type, e.g., Fibromas, Lipomas, Histiocytomas, Basal cell tumor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Condition</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Signs/Tests</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Calcinosis cutis</strong></td>
<td>Mineralization of the skin usually due to an excess of corticosteroids; also rarely occurs in kidney failure, or in granulomas and tumors</td>
<td>Skin scrapings, biopsy, history, and other clinical signs, adrenal gland function tests</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Callus</strong></td>
<td>Results from chronic pressure, especially in large breed dogs</td>
<td>History, clinical signs</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Canine acne</strong></td>
<td>Deep inflammation of hair follicles; exact cause unknown; usually in young dogs; may see secondary bacterial infection</td>
<td>Papules, and sometimes draining lesions on chin and lips</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Chiggers (harvest mites)</strong></td>
<td>Seasonal disease caused by larvae of the chigger</td>
<td>Itching, bumps usually on feet, abdomen (belly), folds at base of ears</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Coccidioidomycosis</strong></td>
<td>Caused by the fungus <em>Coccidioides immitis</em> found in the soil in the Southwestern U.S.</td>
<td>Draining nodules over infected bones; usually see respiratory signs, fever, weight loss</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Cryptococcosis</strong></td>
<td>Fungal infection often transmitted through bird droppings; more common in dogs with suppressed immune systems</td>
<td>Nodules often over the nose, which may ulcerate; many other signs depending on what other body systems are infected</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Cutaneous horn</strong></td>
<td>Benign growths of hard tissue, which look like small horns; cause unknown, though may be associated with some underlying disease such as cancers or follicular cysts</td>
<td>½ to 2 inch hard horn-like growths; may be single or multiple; in cats, may occur on foot pads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cuterebra</strong></td>
<td>Caused by the 1-1½ inch larva of the Cuterebra fly; usually seen in late summer</td>
<td>Nodule forms around the larva; usually found on the head and neck; nodule has a small opening through which the larva breathes and will eventually escape</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Dracunculiasis</strong></td>
<td>Nodule formed around the parasitic worm Dracunculus insignis (Guinea worm)</td>
<td>Single or multiple nodules on limbs, head, and belly; nodules may drain</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Drug or injection reaction</strong></td>
<td>Rare skin reaction to a drug which is inhaled, given orally, or applied topically; more common with penicillins, sulfonamides,</td>
<td>Can vary widely and may include itching, hair loss, redness, swelling, papules, crusts, ulcers, and draining wounds</td>
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<tr>
<td>Condition</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Characteristics</td>
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<tr>
<td>Epidermal inclusion cysts (infundibular cysts)</td>
<td>Result from body's reaction to certain skin cells</td>
<td>Very small, up to 2 inch diameter nodules, which often contain thick sebaceous material</td>
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<tr>
<td>Epitheliotropic lymphoma (mycosis fungoides)</td>
<td>Rare cancer of T lymphocytes seen in older dogs</td>
<td>Can take multiple forms: redness with itching and scale; ulcers and loss of pigment; one or more nodules; oral ulcers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fibroma</td>
<td>Uncommon benign tumor</td>
<td>Single nodule with a pedicle, usually on legs, groin, or sides</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fibrosarcoma</td>
<td>Rapidly growing, invasive tumor; may occur at the site of a vaccination or injection</td>
<td>Irregular-shaped, firm nodule; may ulcerate</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Flea allergy dermatitis (flea bite hypersensitivity)</strong></td>
<td>Severe reaction by the dog to the saliva of the flea</td>
<td>Intense itching, redness, hair loss papules, crusts, and scales; sometimes development of infection or hot spots</td>
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<tr>
<td>Follicular cyst</td>
<td>Most common cyst; may be called 'sebaceous cysts' by some veterinarians</td>
<td>Single round nodules on or underneath the skin; may appear bluish; may contain a thick, yellowish to gray material; usually found on the head, neck, and trunk</td>
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<tr>
<td>Granulomas</td>
<td>May be due to infections; the body's reaction to foreign material such as plant material (e.g., foxtail) and suture material; other constant irritation; or unknown causes</td>
<td>Solid firm nodules of varying sizes; those due to foreign bodies often have draining tracts; may develop hair loss, ulcers, and secondary infections</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hemangiosarcoma</td>
<td>Malignant, invasive tumor more common on sun-damaged skin</td>
<td>Blue to reddish black nodule; usually on chest or abdomen; often ulcerate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Condition</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Clinical Features</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Hematoma</strong></td>
<td>Localized collection of blood that has leaked out of blood vessels; often occurs in dogs with ear infections and pendulous ears</td>
<td>These may appear as firm or fluid-filled nodules of varying shapes and sizes</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Histiocytoma</strong></td>
<td>Benign tumor of younger dogs</td>
<td>Solitary raised, red nodules with a strawberry-like appearance; usually on the legs, head, and ears</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Histiocytosis</strong></td>
<td>There are several kinds of histiocytosis: Malignant, which is a cancer that affects the skin and internal organs; Systemic, which is a rare disease which affects skin and internal organs; Cutaneous, which is a benign disease affecting the skin</td>
<td>All cause nodules with hair loss; malignant and systemic also have ulcers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Histoplasmosis</strong></td>
<td>Fungal infection, which can rarely cause skin lesions</td>
<td>Ulcerated and draining nodules; most commonly see respiratory and gastrointestinal symptoms</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Hookworms</strong></td>
<td>Infection with the larvae (immature forms) of hookworms</td>
<td>Red bumps, usually on feet, rough foot pads, abnormal nail growth, itching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Infundibular keratinizing acanthoma</strong></td>
<td>Rare benign nodules more common in young Norwegian Elkhounds</td>
<td>One or more small to ½ inch nodules, with small opening through which thick material can be expressed</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Kerion</strong></td>
<td>Complication of ringworm infection</td>
<td>Nodule with hair loss and multiple draining tracts; may not see other signs of ringworm</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Leishmaniasis</strong></td>
<td>Caused by a parasite of blood cells; can be transmitted to people who develop a very severe disease</td>
<td>Hair loss, scaling, ulcers on nose and ears, sometimes nodules; many other nonskin-related signs</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Lichenoid dermatosis</strong></td>
<td>Often a response to other underlying disease such as fleas or bacterial infections</td>
<td>Small flat nodules with thick surfaces</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Lipoma</strong></td>
<td>Uncommon benign fatty tumor</td>
<td>Usually single, soft, domed nodule; can become very large</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Lymphoma</strong></td>
<td>Common cancer in dogs; can involve the skin</td>
<td>Itching, ulcers, nodules, redness</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Diagnosis</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Mammary cancer</strong></td>
<td>Most common in unspayed females; in dogs, 50% are malignant</td>
<td>Single or multiple nodules under the skin, of varying sizes, often irregular in shape; may ulcerate and drain</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Mast cell tumor</strong></td>
<td>Common cancer which is graded from 1-4: Grade 1 is slow-growing tumors, and Grade 4 is rapidly growing malignant tumors with metastases</td>
<td>Tumors may be of various sizes, appearances, and numbers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Melanoma</strong></td>
<td>Malignant tumor of older dogs</td>
<td>Usually single dark-colored nodule, which often ulcerates</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Nevi</strong></td>
<td>Usually benign lesions; some types may indicate the presence of an underlying disease</td>
<td>Well-delineated firm nodules, often multiple and on the head and neck</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Nocardia</strong></td>
<td>Bacterial infection usually acquired from a puncture wound</td>
<td>Usually see respiratory signs; skin lesions include draining nodules</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Panniculitis</strong></td>
<td>May be caused by trauma, foreign bodies, infections, autoimmune diseases or unknown causes</td>
<td>Deep-seated nodules, often ulcerated and draining; usually on the body vs. the head or limbs; may see loss of appetite, depression</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Pelodera dermatitis</strong></td>
<td>Accidental infection with larvae from a non-parasitic worm that lives in straw and other organic material</td>
<td>Affects areas of skin touching ground; intense itching, redness, hair loss, papules, crusts, and scales</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Phaeohyphomycosis</strong></td>
<td>Caused by wound contamination with a fungus</td>
<td>A single nodule on the legs or multiple ulcerated and draining nodules over the body</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Pyoderma-deep (bacterial infections of skin and underlying tissue)</strong></td>
<td>Often secondary to another skin disease such as self-inflicted trauma, wounds, acral lick granulomas, allergies, seborrhea</td>
<td>Ulcerated pustules or nodules, draining tracts, crusts, and thickened skin</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Pythiosis</strong></td>
<td>Caused by an aquatic mold</td>
<td>Ulcerated draining nodules on the legs, head, and base of tail, which may itch; often see other signs of illness due to infection of the gastrointestinal tract</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Ringworm</strong></td>
<td>Infection with several types of fungus</td>
<td>Hair loss, scaliness, crusty areas, pustules, and vesicles, some itching; can develop a draining nodule called a 'kerion'</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sarcoptic mange</strong></td>
<td>Infection with the <em>Sarcoptes</em> mite</td>
<td>Intense itching and self-trauma, hair loss, papules, crusts, and scales</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Schnauzer comedo syndrome</strong></td>
<td>Uncommon; only seen in Miniature Schnauzers</td>
<td>Comedones (black heads) on back, mild itching; may see secondary infection, thinning of hair; small crusts may develop</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sebaceous gland cyst</strong></td>
<td>Extremely rare</td>
<td>Firm nodules, usually less than ½ inch in diameter</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sebaceous gland tumors</strong></td>
<td>Common; rarely spread or recur; several types</td>
<td>Nodules, which may ulcerate; usually on the head and legs</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Skin cancer</strong></td>
<td>See specific type, e.g., Fibrosarcoma, Melanoma, Squamous cell carcinoma, Mast cell tumor, Lymphoma</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Spider bites/eosinophilic folliculitis</strong></td>
<td>Bites from some spiders and caterpillars contain strong toxins; usually appear on the nose of dogs and paws of cats</td>
<td>Immediately after the bite, swelling, redness, pain; subsequently may develop extensive ulcers with draining</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sporotrichosis</strong></td>
<td>Caused by the fungus <em>Sporothrix schenckii</em>, which generally enters through a puncture wound</td>
<td>Raised nodules with multiple draining tracts; cats may develop fever, depression, and loss of appetite</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Squamous cell carcinoma</strong></td>
<td>Common malignant tumor; may occur more commonly in sun-damaged or chronically irritated skin</td>
<td>Two forms: Cauliflower-like lesions, often ulcerated more common on lips and nose; Crusted ulcers on limbs or body</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Superficial necrolytic dermatitis of Miniature Schnauzers</strong></td>
<td>Skin reaction to shampoos (usually insecticidal or medicated)</td>
<td>Papules, pustules, and ulcers with drainage; develop 2-3 days after exposure to the shampoo; may also see fever and depression</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Tail dock neuroma</strong></td>
<td>Nerve regrowth after tail docking causes symptoms</td>
<td>Nodule at site of docking, itching with self-mutilation, hair loss, and hyperpigmentation</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Tail gland hyperplasia</strong></td>
<td>Dogs have a sebaceous gland on the top of the tail near its base; in this disorder, the gland enlarges; seen in unneutered dogs and secondary to other diseases such as hypothyroidism</td>
<td>Oily area, hair loss, crusts, and hyperpigmentation on area over gland</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Tick bites</strong></td>
<td>Ticks cause a local inflammation in the skin, even when the entire tick is removed</td>
<td>Nodule and redness at site of the bite; may itch and develop crusts; may last several months</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Urticaria (hives)</strong></td>
<td>Reaction, often allergic, to insect bite, drug, vaccine, sunlight, etc.</td>
<td>Multiple swellings, with hair standing up over swellings; itching may occur</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Warts (cutaneous papilloma)</strong></td>
<td>Benign growths caused by a virus; usually seen in puppies</td>
<td>Light-colored growths with a cauliflower appearance; usually on the lips, tongue, inside of the mouth, and eyelids</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Zygomycosis</strong></td>
<td>Uncommon fungal disease</td>
<td>Draining nodules; may also see pneumonia, vomiting, or jaundice depending upon the body organs involved</td>
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</tbody>
</table>