

Cat Shampoos: The Function of Common Ingredients

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Many shampoos have been developed to treat a variety of skin conditions in cats and dogs. Understanding the function of the various ingredients may appear daunting. The following table should help you understand why certain ingredients are included in a shampoo. This information can help you, with consultation from your veterinarian, select the right one for your pet's skin condition.

INGREDIENTS	COMMENTS
INSECTICIDALS	For treatment and prevention of fleas, ticks, and some types of mange
Pyrethrin	
Pyrethroids, such as permethrin	DO NOT USE ON CATS
Carbaryl	Good if sensitive to pyrethrin
ANTISEBORRHEIC	For removal and prevention of scales, and in some cases to remove excess oils
For seborrhea oleosa	Characterized by scales and excess oils
Sulfur	Removes scale and crust, and reduces scale production Antibacterial and antifungal Reduces itching Works best when used with an equal concentration of salicylic acid
Salicylic acid	Removes scale and crust, and reduces scale production Reduces itching Antibacterial Works best when used with an equal concentration of sulfur
Refined Tar	Most potent ingredient to reduce scale production Reduces itching Degreases Can be irritating DO NOT USE ON CATS
Selenium sulfide	Removes scale and crust, and reduces scale production Antibacterial and antifungal Degreases Can be irritating to scrotum and mucous

	<p>membranes Best to limit its use to yeast infections and severe oiliness Must leave on at least 10 minutes for antifungal activity DO NOT USE ON CATS</p>
Benzoyl peroxide	<p>Removes scale and crust Can dry out the skin Excellent degreaser, and flushes out hair follicles Antibacterial</p>
For seborrhea sicca	<p>Characterized by dry scales</p>
Sulfur	<p>Removes scale and crust, and reduces scale production Antibacterial and antifungal Reduces itching Works best when used with an equal concentration of salicylic acid</p>
Salicylic acid	<p>Removes scale and crust, and reduces scale production Reduces itching Antibacterial Works best when used with an equal concentration of sulfur</p>
ANTIPRURITIC	<p>For relief of itching due to conditions such as atopy and other allergies</p>
Colloidal Oatmeal	<p>Reduces inflammation</p>
Hydrocortisone	<p>Produces minimal side effects when compared to oral steroids</p>
Aloe vera	
Pramoxine hydrochloride	<p>Topical anesthetic</p>
Diphenhydramine	<p>Antihistamine which decreases inflammation</p>
Menthol	<p>Has cooling and anesthetic effect</p>
Sulfur	<p>Removes scale and crust, and reduces scale production Antibacterial and antifungal Reduces itching Works best when used with an equal</p>

	Works best when used with an equal concentration of salicylic acid
Salicylic acid	Removes scale and crust, and reduces scale production Reduces itching Antibacterial Works best when used with an equal concentration of sulfur
Cool water rinses	
ANTIBACTERIALS	For treatment of bacterial infections such as pyoderma, folliculitis, and impetigo
Benzoyl Peroxide	Removes scale and crust Can dry out the skin Excellent degreaser, and flushes out hair follicles Antibacterial
Chlorhexidine	Higher concentrations may be irritating or dry out the skin in some animals
Povidone Iodine	
Triclosan	Low potency
Ethyl Lactate	Flushes follicles, has some degreasing activity
Sulfur	Removes scale and crust, and reduces scale production Antibacterial and antifungal Reduces itching Works best when used with an equal concentration of salicylic acid Can help prevent Staph infection
ANTIFUNGALS	For treatment of ringworm and yeast infections
Miconazole 2%	Less expensive than ketoconazole
Chlorhexidine 2-4%	Some activity against yeast, less against ringworm Higher concentrations may be irritating or dry out the skin in some animals
Povidone Iodine	Not as effective, can cause irritation
Ketoconazole 2%	Highly effective

Selenium sulfide 1%	Removes scale and crust, and reduces scale production Antibacterial and antifungal Degreases Can be irritating to scrotum and mucous membranes Best to limit its use to yeast infections and severe oiliness Must leave on at least 10 minutes for antifungal activity DO NOT USE ON CATS
EMOLLIENTS	Add oils to skin
Almond Oil	
Corn Oil	
Cottonseed Oil	
Coconut Oil	
Olive Oil	
Peanut Oil	
Persia Oil	
Safflower Oil	
Sesame Oil	
Lanolin	
Mineral Oil	
Paraffin	
EMULSIFIERS	Help distribute emollients
Cetyl Alcohol	
Laureth-5	
Lecithin	
PEG-4 dilaurate	
Stearic acid	
Stearyl alcohol	
HUMECTANTS	Rehydrate skin

Carboxylic Acid	
Lactic Acid	
Urea	
Sodium Lactate	
Propylene Glycol	
Glycerin	
Polyvinylpyrrolidone	
SPECIAL FORMULATIONS	Microscopic particles which can be made to contain a number of ingredients; they adhere to the skin and hair and slowly release their contents
Novosomes®	Release contents over 7-10 days
Spherulites®	Release contents over 8 days