

Skin Lesions in Cats

Eosinophilic granuloma complex (EGC) is a term used to describe a variety of microscopically similar skin lesions in cats. It is not a disease in itself, but is a reaction pattern of the skin to infection and constant itch or licking created by allergies. These might include:

- Pollens
- Dust mites
- Food
- Insect bites (including fleas)

Types of EGC

1. Miliary dermatitis - In this form the cat will have many small crusts on their head and/or body and are usually very itchy.
2. Indolent ulcers (lip ulcers) - In this form there is ulceration on the upper lip often in the area over the canine tooth. There is no itch associated with this form but the lip may be painful to touch.
3. Eosinophilic plaques - This form can occur anywhere the cat can lick. They create hairless, red, raised moist lesions.
4. Eosinophilic granulomas - These appear as nodules and may be on the tongue, roof of the mouth or lick areas on the body, including the back of the legs. They can also form unusual stripes or lines on the belly or down the backs of the legs.

How is EGC treated?

Infection is most commonly present in these lesions and so must always be treated with antibiotics. However, these lesions can be very difficult to resolve if not properly managed, the lesion can become larger and larger and can cause a lot of discomfort for the cat. If we can identify the source of the allergy and remove it (as with fleas or food hypersensitivity) then the cure is simple. In pollen and dust mite allergies, accurate allergy testing is required and an allergy vaccine (desensitisation) is used to prevent relapses. EGC's can be a very difficult disease to control unless infection and allergy is identified and controlled. The prognosis for control is excellent with appropriate diagnostic testing and treatment.