

Hormone creams affecting our pets

Veterinarians are seeing more and more spayed and neutered pets presenting for side effects attributed to excessive amounts of estrogen. This phenomenon has been reported to be secondary to hormone replacement cream used by women. Hormone replacement therapy is used to supplement the body with either estrogen alone or estrogen and progesterone in combination during and after menopause.

Pets are being inadvertently exposed to the hormone cream by rubbing against or licking the area in which the cream is applied. Pet owners whose dogs have been affected by this have noticed bleeding from the vulva in spayed females, vulvar enlargement in spayed females, and mammary gland enlargement in both spayed and neutered females and males. Behavioral problems can also be noted.

Other than unwanted hormonal changes high levels of estrogen can cause anemia due to bone marrow suppression. Blood work should be performed to monitor for any evidence of this.

The effects of estrogens can take 2-3 weeks to set in and it may take months for clinical signs to abate after exposure.

It is recommended for women to wear gloves when applying the hormone cream and apply to an area of skin which the pet is never exposed to. Carefully remove the gloves to minimize any exposure to hands, wash hands, and discard the gloves where the pet cannot access them.