

Grass Seed Season



It's that time of year again, grass seeds are everywhere which means your vet is going to be busier than they are at any other time of the year. Here in South Australia, we deal with two different types of grass seed. The round burr type and then the long sharp ones seen with rye grasses.

Round burr grass seeds are annoying but generally easy to deal with, they get caught in fur and pet coats but don't normally go down ear canals or into the skin. We find them most commonly between toes they get all wrapped up in the hair between each toe and create a hot red wet area that your pet will lick at a lot. This commonly leads to secondary yeast or bacterial infections. Sometimes the burr can just be teased out but it may require clipping all of the hair between the toes to fix up.

Long straight grass seeds like we are seeing everywhere at the moment are a much bigger problem. We are going to see at least one pet a week that has a grass seed stuck in their ear. The grass seeds have evolved to catch onto passing animals like velcro. They do this with tiny little curled barbs. Now some pets will be calm enough for me to fully evaluate their ear canal without any sedation on board. But as you can imagine it can be really painful having a grass seed stuck in your ear. The last place we want to be is two inches away from the mouth of a dog with a sore ear. So, a lot of these patients are going to need sedation or a quick anaesthetic so that we can safely work around their ear.

Frustratingly we find some pets with sore ears but no grass seed. In these cases, we suspect they have managed to dislodge the grass seed but caused themselves quite a bit of pain. We also see a lot of dogs that have had a grass seed removed from their ear develop an ear infection a few days afterwards. We suspect this is because the grass seed damages the lining of the canal allowing the normal bacteria that live in the ear to overgrow and cause a problem.

Grass seeds also penetrate the skin and cause nasty abscesses. These happen most often between toes but they can gain purchase almost anywhere. Sometimes we get lucky and they can be removed easily but all too often they require quite large surgeries to open the whole abscess and search for the intruder.

Keep your dog's coat as short as you can and check the feet and ears after every walk to help prevent grass seeds as much as possible.

**Is your pet up to date with their preventatives?
Have you noticed any new lumps on your pet's skin that you are worried about?
Book an appointment now by calling us on 8265 3399
or by visiting our website (ttgvvet.com.au) and using the 'Book Now' button.**