

GRASS SEEDS



The problem with grass seeds...

Many dog owners will already be well aware that grass seeds can be more than just an irritation to their dogs over the summer months.

Grass seeds present a potential hazard to dogs usually from June until September. Dry sunny spells see a greater number of seeds falling to the ground where they can be picked up in the hair of a dog's paw. Grass seeds vary in size, but all are like mini 'darts' with fine hairs and a sharp point at one end. The sharp point can easily pierce the thin skin between a dog's toes. Because the seeds have tiny 'micro barbs' they do not just drop out of the skin; this is what makes them a potentially complicated problem to deal with.



If a grass seed enters through the skin of your dog's paw, this is highly irritating and can become quite sore. Your dog will usually start licking its paw excessively, there may be a red lump between their toes and they may become lame. It is important to seek veterinary advice as soon as you see these symptoms. Grass seeds will continue to migrate into your dog's paw, and can travel a considerable way if not found. It has been known for seeds to travel all the way up a dog's limb and into the chest.

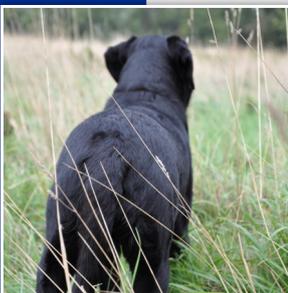
Sometimes the tail of the grass seed can be seen sticking out of the swelling between your dog's toes and a vet or owner can remove the seed easily. If the seed has travelled deeper into the tissue, sedation (or even full anaesthetic) is required to hunt for it. Prompt action is important – it is far easier to find a grass seed close to the skin's surface than one that has penetrated deeper.



Grass seeds can also find their way into ears and eyes and can even be snorted up noses. If your pet suddenly starts to shake their head after a walk, this might indicate a grass seed in their ear canal. This requires prompt attention, because seeds can travel towards the ear drum and cause problems there.

Cats can get grass seeds in their eyes, ears and up their noses, but this is generally uncommon.

Keeping the hair on your dog's paws short, checking ears and paws after a walk and avoiding long dry grass whenever possible are good ways to reduce the chances of an irritating encounter with a grass seed.



If you're worried about if your pet has a grass seed, please book an appointment to see the veterinary surgeon as soon as possible.

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