



My Westie is Itchy...what should I do... and not do!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

You are probably reading this because you are at your wits end with your itchy Westie. You have been to a number of Vets with little if any improvements and it has been expensive and frustrating...watching your darling Westie suffer is a terrible thing.

We have been asked by many folks to make a step by step document of our Westies in Need itchy skin protocol-so here goes...it is LONG and there is lots of info...but please read it carefully and let us know if you have any questions...Westies in Need has had some incredible improvements...we know Westie skin!



I think we should start by saying that your Vet may NOT agree with some of our suggestions...many Vets are wonderful and very open to new ideas...some are not! However, you have been to a number of Vet appointments and spent hundreds (if not thousands) of dollars and yet here you are, still searching for a solution to your itchy Westie, so...you have to begin to ask yourself (and ask your Vet!!!!) “How has that been working for you?????”

You are your Westies biggest health advocate and he relies on you to act as his voice when it comes to interpreting and relaying any concerns to the Vet. Trusting your instincts and doing your own research is essential in ensuring your concerns are heard.

As we said...many Vets are wonderful and open to different ideas...but the bottom line is that you should never feel uncomfortable with the way your Vet treats you...yes he/she is the expert, but they do NOT know your dog the way you do. **If** you have a Vet that has an “I am the expert and what I say goes” kinda attitude, then you are not in a relationship that will help your Westie.

Whether your Westies issue is yeast, food, environmental or bacteria related, you can either repeatedly treat the symptoms or choose to get to the root of the problem so you do not have to treat the symptoms any longer. Our approach is always to get to the root of the problem.

I guess that we should also begin by making our lawyer happy and say “While every endeavor is made to provide reliable, useful advice not every dog is the same and neither food nor medical treatments can be said to apply in every case. You should use this information as a RESOURCE to guide your own research and to help you in discussions with your Vet.”

OK...now that is out of the way...let’s start...first...

Blood Work: you will need to make sure your Vet has done full blood chemistry on your Westie-you will need to have a starting benchmark to begin with. Some Vets call this a “Wellness Panel”, other Vets have other names...but you need to find out organ function,

electrolytes, hematology, proteins etc. **It is VERY important to make sure that you include a full thyroid panel as well** (more thyroid info will follow below) but you need to have that included.

You **MUST** insist that you see and have a copy of all tests done on your Westie...a Vet saying “I did the blood work and it is all normal” is not good enough any longer. You have now made the decision to be an **ACTIVE** participant in your Westies health and that begins with the results. Blood work can be expensive but very worth it.

Thyroid: Many, many itchy Westies have hypothyroidism. Hypothyroidism is the condition where your dog has an inadequate active thyroid hormone. Thyroxine (also known as T4) is the major hormone secreted by the thyroid gland. The thyroid gland is part of the endocrine system, the collection of glands that produce all of the body’s hormones. Together the endocrine glands control almost every cellular function.

The thyroid gland is an essential gland for life. If it is diseased or destroyed, thyroxine replacement therapy must be provided for the rest of the animal’s life in order for the cellular activities to function properly.

Dermatological Signs of Hypothyroidism:

- Dry, scaly skin and dandruff
- Chronic offensive skin odor
- Coarse, dull coat
- Bilaterally symmetrical hair loss
- Rat tail
- Puppy coat
- Seborrhea with dry or greasy skin
- Hyperpigmentation (black skin)
- Pyoderma or skin infections
- Dry eye
- Cold intolerance
- Yeast over growth

Hypothyroidism has increased significantly over the last few years...some even call it an epidemic. But why is this happening??? The answers are simple really...poor breeding, over vaccinating, chemical flea, tick, heartworm treatments and non steroidal and anti inflammatory medications

This is why it is so important to have your Westies’ thyroid tested. Some Vets may recommend only a T4 panel be done on your dog...**please know that this shorten and modified test is not enough.**

If only the T4 is tested and if the T4 is “normal” your Vet may claim that the dog does not suffer from thyroid disease. Next you may spend months and thousands of dollars trying to find out what is wrong with your dog and it may have been an easy fix...a full thyroid panel.



A complete Thyroid panel is:

- T4
- T3
- free T4
- free T3
- TgAA

When you see the results that your Vet will show and **give** you for your dogs' thyroid function from the full thyroid panel, you will see what the lab refers to as a "normal" range. If your Westie's thyroid function is only 0.1 % above the low end of that "normal" your Vet may say that the thyroid is fine. **IT IS NOT**...for our breed and for a dog with skin issues, we want to see the thyroid level in the 50% range...so if your Westie is not showing a thyroid function of about 50%, they **MUST** go on a medication called Thyroxin. You will never completely get your Westie's skin well if the thyroid is not functioning well.

In our experience, a Westie is considered to suffer from sub clinical hypothyroidism if his hormone levels fall within the lower 50% of the normal range. To calculate the 50% point, simply add the lower and highest values and divide by two.

Examples:

T4

Laboratory (normal) Range is: 13.0-53.0

13.0 plus 53.0 = 66

66 divide by 2 = 33

If your dog has a T4 level below 33 they are considered to suffer from sub clinical hypothyroidism

Free T4

Laboratory (normal) Range is 7.7 – 47.6

7.7 plus 47.6 = 55.3

55.3 divide by 2 =27.65

If your dog has a T3 level below 27.65 they are considered to suffer from sub clinical hypothyroidism

You can see the laboratory ranges above vary widely and are merely guidelines. As we said before- trust your instincts-if you have noticed your normally happy and healthy dog showing some of the signs and symptoms that we mentioned above speak to your Vet about a trial of thyroid supplementation.





Edward- August 31st



Edward October 22nd

MEDICATIONS: you have most probably a cupboard with assorted medications that you have tried that is overflowing and has been costly. Our rescue is well aware that Vets must make money to survive and run their business; however there comes a point, when a pet owner feels that they are paying WAY too much for medications.

To that end, may we suggest that you always check prices of medications before you get them from your Vet. Most folks do not know that is an option...but it is!!!! If your Vet prescribes a medication you can simply ask him or her for the paper prescription and not the medication itself.

There are several discount Pet pharmacies in the US and in Canada, but we will be using a Canadian pet pharmacy our rescue uses, ThePetPharmacist.ca as an example.

Type of Medication	Price at The Pet Pharmacy on line	Price we paid at the Vet Office
Atopica-liquid, 5ml bottle	\$37.95	\$71.82
Mometamax (ear meds for yeast infection)	\$35.59	\$70.82
Cyclosporine-antibiotic for skin infections-25mg for 30 pills	\$32.85	\$91.00

So, please do your home work before buying medication from the Vet...it can possibly save you a lot of \$ in the long term to buy on line from a pet pharmacy.



Right now you may be asking...but my Westie was fine for a few years... why have they developed these skin problems now?

As the dog ages and the number of antigens he is exposed to increases, his immune system must work harder to recognize and fight them. If you compare the immune system to a wall with the immune memory cells functioning as the wall's building blocks...so with each new antigen exposure another building block is added to the wall to strengthen its protect abilities. Eventually these building blocks pile up and the immune systems wall becomes too high and unstable, causing it to collapse.

Yeast: Far too often when Westies are diagnosed with allergies, they are in fact really suffering from a systemic yeast infection, be it on the surface of the skin or the whole system. If this is the case, antibiotics and steroids will not clear up the source of the problem. They only address secondary bacterial infections and provide temporary relief from itching.

Yeast problems can be caused by different yeast organisms. One is *Malassezia* which is a common yeast organism found on normal and abnormal Westie skin and ears. Other yeast problems involve *Candida*, which can be systemic (systemic means "affecting the entire body," rather than a single organ or body part) and the root cause of the problem. Yeast found in the body changes to its fungal form and starts to overgrow in the gut, causing toxins to leak into the body and causing a breakdown in the body's defenses (immune system). The result is that we start to see a reaction (such as a skin, coat, ears) and the reaction is in the whole body's system (systemic). If you understand that the skin is the biggest filter organ in the body, you can understand that this is where the junk and toxins in the body end up, causing the issues you see in your Westie.

Our yeasty Westies (they smell like popcorn or a corn chip kinda smell) all go on a 30-60 day course of Ketoconazole. Ketoconazole belongs to a general class of drugs known as antifungal drugs and inhibits the growth of fungal organisms by interfering with the formation of the fungal cell wall.

More info about what to feed your Westie will follow below-but in this section about yeast we wanted to remind you that you must take a VERY careful look at what you are feeding your Westie---a low glysemic diet is best....don't feed the yeast!!! Yeast needs sugars to grow...so please try to eliminate or greatly reduce in both foods and treats:

- potatoes
- sweet potatoes
- tapioca
- black strap molasses

After our Westies have completed their 30-60 days of Ketoconazole, we finish our yeasty Westies off with a more natural yeast cleanse to complete the treatment. We use the program from [Nzymes](#) and have had great results. There are 3 products we use (the company recommends other products but we have found that these 3 are the best to purchase)

- Oxy Drops
- Nzymes granules
- Black Leaf tincture

All the usage instructions are on the [Nzymes](#) website and are also included with the items if you purchase the products-simple to use and easy to understand.

Bacteria: All of our itchy Westies have some level of Pyoderma- Pyoderma literally means “pus in the skin” and refers to a bacterial infection of the skin. From our experience, the “tried and true” antibiotics that Vets use (Baytril, Cephalexin, etc) are good, but we have had better results using an injectable Convenia (which is a brand name for cefovecin). It is a long-acting antibiotic that exerts its antibacterial effects for approximately 1-2 weeks but stays in the body for over 2 months. This is in contrast to non-repositol antibiotics which are rapidly cleared from the body and need to be administered 1 - 2 times per day by a pill form. We give our itchy Westies an injection of Convenia (cefovecin) on day 1 and again on day 14 of their treatment.



Mange: There are 2 types of mange...one is Demodectic and one is Sarcoptic. Most dogs are immune to mange; however dogs with compromised immune systems are at a higher risk. Your Vet can do a simple skin scraping to make sure your Westie does not have mange---again without that info you can pump all kinds of medications and drugs into them and they will not improve if mange is present, so you need to rule out mange.

Vaccinations: There is a lot of controversy right now over vaccinations (in both people and pets) and the fallout of over vaccinating your Westie can be devastating. In our opinion (and we have to stress here that this is our opinion and you must do your own due diligence with your research!!!) we would suggest that you consider NOT vaccinating your Westie until their skin has been 100% perfect for **over a year**. We mean no rabies, no DHPP and no heartworm.

Afterwards, if you choose to vaccinate your Westie (and yes it is a choice!!!) the most important thing we suggest is to NEVER vaccinate your Westie for anything in the spring, summer or fall months. Their immune systems are at their most vulnerable at those times and skin problems are much more likely to occur. **Only vaccinate your Westie if there is snow on the ground!!!**

Also, never vaccinate for rabies and DHPP at the same time-it is very hard on Westies and again not good for their immune system. It is very important to wait at least 2 weeks between rabies and DHPP-they should NEVER be given at the same appointment.

When you think of vaccinations...always remember that old saying “the cure can sometimes be much worse than the disease”

Given the fact that annual visits provide the bulk of many Vet practices it is not surprising that there has been significant resistance to attempts at changing vaccination protocols.

A “one size fits all “vaccination program for dogs is simply incorrect-a Westie who is always with their owner, rarely off leash and always well supervised does not need the same vaccinations as an outdoor farm dog left to his or her own devices. Each animal should be evaluated and immunized based on a program individually tailored to their needs and health.

When choosing to vaccinate or not the best thing to do is to trust your instincts. Your Vet might even try to convince you that there is no scientific evidence linking vaccinations with adverse reaction, serious illness and even death. This is pure ignorance and confuses well meaning dog parents who are searching for all the facts in an effort to provide the best level of care.

If you find that your Vet is pressuring you into over vaccinating your pet or that he or she refuses to perform a titer test in lieu of yearly boosters, you can choose to walk out of the office and find a more open-minded practitioner.

Titer-Testing-an alternative to vaccinations: A number of our Westie folks have opted for a titers test each year and not deferring to the automatic vaccination protocol. A titer test (pronounced TIGHT-er) is a laboratory test measuring the existence and level of antibodies to disease in blood. Most experts believe that strong titers are a more reliable indication of immunity than vaccinations: tests show the **actual** immune response...not just the attempt to cause an immune response by vaccination.

Food Allergy Testing: In a nut shell, testing for allergies to different foods is simply not accurate on dogs. We never recommend food allergy testing and suggest that you spend your money on other treatments.

Please don't confuse food allergy testing with Allergen Specific Immunotherapy (serum allergy testing-environmental) as they are 2 VERY different things!

Allergen Immunotherapy (also termed desensitization) is a treatment that has shown wonderful success with itchy Westies with Atopic Dermatitis (when their itch is due to environmental allergies)

Allergen immunotherapy rehabilitates the dog's immune system. The therapy involves administering increasing doses of allergens to accustom the Westie to substances that are generally harmless (pollen, house dust mites) and thereby induces specific long-term tolerance.

OK...so what does all that mean??? Simply put, your dog will receive the very things (in small doses) of exactly what she is allergic to and her immune system will learn how to tolerate them.

Method #1 (this is the one we like and always suggest to our owners)

Blood Serum Test: A 10 ml blood sample is drawn by your regular Vet from your Westie and sent into the lab. The blood is screened for a reaction to a broad range of allergens including pollens, dust, and molds that are common to the geographical area where you live.

If your Westie is currently on medication like steroids or an antihistamine, you do NOT need to stop the medication for the blood serum test.

Method #2 (this is the one we don't suggest-but we want you to have all the facts)

Intradermal Skin testing: In this test, your Westie will be sedated and have a large patch of fur shaved. A small amount of 50 different antigens are injected into the skin and after a short period of time, the area around the injection site is observed to determine if your Westie is allergic to the allergen.

Your Westie must be off any oral or topical steroid medication for 4 weeks prior to this test and must be off antihistamines for 14 days. They suggest you remove all Omegas' from their food and not to bathe them as well...in other words they are looking for a positive reaction- so they need your Westie to be ITCHY!!!! (now you are seeing why we don't really like this method!)

So what happens next...your Vet will send the blood off to a lab for results. There are 3 labs we use: (we have had a few "false positive" results from other labs, so we suggest your Vet uses)

- VARL Labs in California
- Greer Labs in North Carolina
- Heska Labs in Colorado

Now this is an important part-so please know...

If your Westie reacts to lets say cat dander and it's a big reaction then the lab would for sure put this in and is taking up space (only 10-12 allergens can be put in the allergy shots) BUT...if that Westie has no exposure to cats then it doesn't need to be in.

When your regular Vet (or even better, a Canine Dermatologist!!!) formulates the allergy results please know what they are including...again, if your dog is allergic to cats but has no exposure to them not much sense to add it!!!!

You will then receive, from the lab, a series of vials that will contain the exact allergens that your Westie has tested positive for in higher concentrations.

If you are reading this and you are in Canada or the US...there is now sublingual immunotherapy (under the tongue) allergy drops. In the past you would have had to give your little one allergy shots, but YEA!!! no longer. Just a drop under the tongue and they are good to go.

Next, a program will be laid out for you and you will use the different concentrations of the serum as the months go along-higher concentrations means less often, so that is a good thing!

The first stage is the "induction" phase and then comes the "maintenance" phase. Each program or protocol will be different, but an average one would be:

- Induction Phase- 3 months long. Your Westie will require the allergy drops to begin every other day, then down to once a week and then down to once every 2 weeks.
- Maintenance Phase- Your Westie will require the allergy drops once every 3 weeks and then once a month and then once every 2 months.

There may be seasonal components involved as well...perhaps in the winter months they will not require the drops at all and then in the spring and fall it may need to be increased

Your Westie may need these allergy drops for only a few months or perhaps for the rest of his life...but if he is happy and comfortable and not itchy... it is well worth it. We have found that more than 75% of Westie have very positive results to this therapy.

Common Medications:

Apoquel: is relatively new to Canada and is a medication that many Vets prescribe to itchy Westies. Apoquel is used to treat and control itching and inflammation resulting from a variety of causes, including flea allergy, food allergy, contact allergy and atopic dermatitis.

Benefits:

- Provides onset of relief within 4 hours
- Effectively controls itch within 24 hours
- Safe for short term and long term usage
- Uniquely targeted to stop the itch with minimal negative impact on immune function

Atopica: (generic name is Cyclosporin) is another medication that many Vets prescribe but it does have some side effects...so we like the Apoquel better!!!!

Atopica is available in both pill and liquid form. Atopica can make dogs vomit or have diarrhea however it may not be the medication itself (there is castor bean oil in both the pill and liquid forms) that does not sit well with them. Put the Atopica capsule or liquid in the freezer or fridge and the vomiting and/or diarrhea should be lessened. If your Westie is still vomiting from the Atopica, consider the Allergen Specific Immunotherapy or call your Vet re: reducing the dose!

Immune System: When you have a Westie that is itchy, has open sores, is biting at his feet or has chronic ear infections, you have a dog with an immune problem. Even if you cure or control the current problem, you will never completely fix the issue if you do not improve the immune system. Good quality foods, no stress and limit or eliminate all vaccinations will all help to improve immune function.

Steroid Use: Hydrocortisone, Vanectyl P (combining trimeprazine and prednisolone) and Prednisone are common drugs that Vets will use to stop a dog from scratching. These steroids should be only used in **extreme cases** and only for very short periods of time. They are meant to "put the fire out" to give the Westie some immediate relief but should never be used long term as they can do serious and irreparable damage to organs.

Before you enter into the world of long term steroid use for your Westie you must be aware that again...the cure can be much worse than the disease.

When your Vet suggests that you put your Westie on Vanectyl P or Cortisone, can we PLEASE suggest that you ask him or her..."hey, what about Hydroxyzine instead???"

Hydroxyzine is an antihistamine used for the treatment of allergies, flea bite dermatitis, and atopy. It helps stop the itching and has **much fewer side effects** than corticosteroids (Vanectyl P and Cortisone) Hydroxyzine works by blocking the actions of histamine in the body. Histamine is the chemical responsible for many of the symptoms seen when an allergic reaction occurs.



Food Allergies: Some Westies may be allergic to foods, but simply being fed these may not be enough in itself to get their immune systems hopped up to the point where itching occurs. However, when the pollens and molds of spring, summer and fall are added, the total number of allergens present will have reached high enough concentrations, thus exceeding the threshold, to cause allergic symptoms such as chronic itching. Food can certainly exacerbate a Westie's itchy condition and that is why it is so important not to feed foods that are known to be likely contributors...so everyone repeat after us...when choosing food and treats..."**no wheat, no corn, no soy, no beef, no lamb, no dairy**"...repeat please so we know you have it..."**no wheat, no corn, no soy, no beef, no lamb, no dairy**"

It can be difficult to distinguish a Westie suffering from food allergies from a Westie suffering from environmental allergies based on physical signs. However, there are a few signs that increase the suspicion that food allergies may be present:

- recurrent ear problems, particularly yeast infections.
- a very young dog with moderate or severe skin problems.
- a dog suffers from allergies year-round or if the symptoms begin in the winter
- a dog that has very itchy skin but does not respond to steroid treatment.

So what should you feed your Westie...

well we can certainly tell you foods that we would NOT recommend... (OK...remember how we had said at the beginning that some Vets will not agree with our program...well, this is one of those parts!!!!)

NEVER FEED: Vet "prescribed" foods such as Science Diet, Hills, Medical, Purina, Royal Canin, Iams, Waltham...these are, in our opinion, poorer quality foods that have many problems for our itchy Westies. If you don't believe us, please check out [The Dog Food Advisor](#)-or [Dog Food Analysis...](#) you may be shocked at the ratings of these "prescribed" foods!

We have found that most of our Westies do best on a fish based diet. What you are looking for is a **grain free, low glysemic diet**...low glysemic (or low sugar producing) because of the info we just told you in the section above about yeast...sugars feed yeast.

Here is a chart that shows you some foods that have a high glysemic index - the scale goes from 1 to 100, 100 being very high on the glysemic chart. **Please note: Potatoes are rated the highest in the glysemic index (sugar levels) for root vegetables. Potatoes have as much sugar in them as a sugar donut** (and I don't think any of us would feed our Westie a sugar donut every day of their lives!!)

• Potatoes 88	• Tapioca 56	• Carrots 47
• Corn 78	• Brown Rice 55	• Blueberries 44
• White Rice 72	• Sweet Potato 50	• Apple 38
• Papaya 56	• Peas 48	• Yam 37

OK... we have made our suggestions on what we suggest NOT to feed...now you need our suggestions on what you SHOULD feed!!!

We get asked every day "What should I feed my Westie?" and our answer is always the same:

- our #1 choice would be a RAW diet,
- our #2 choice would be a well rounded home cooked diet
- our #3 choice would be a good quality grain free, low glysemic kibble



A RAW diet???? Is that good for my dog???? Is it healthy???? ...the answer to all those questions...is YES!!!!

Feeding RAW is an easy, convenient and healthy way to feed...it is the diet that your Westie was built for.

Dogs are carnivores, eaters of raw meat and their systems are designed to extract protein and nutrients from meat in its naturally raw state. Carnivores are not meant to break down complex carbohydrates. Dogs have no use for corn, wheat, soy, rice or grain, which is often the base ingredient used for many dry and canned foods.

There are 3 ways to feed a RAW diet:

Frozen RAW: It is as simple as going to your local pet store and purchasing one of the many bags or boxes of frozen RAW food. They come in a variety of proteins and are as easy as feeding kibble. You take out the amount you will need for 2 or 3 days, let the pieces thaw in a tupperware container in your fridge and then serve.

Freeze Dried RAW: Freeze-drying has long been regarded as the gold standard of food preservation. Unlike conventional kibbles which are cooked at high temperatures, freeze-dried RAW foods are prepared without cooking, so they fully retain the natural properties.

Dehydrated RAW: The process of dehydration removes only the moisture. Because the foods are never cooked, canned or extruded, much more of the natural nutrition is maintained.

Here is our Good, Better, Best breakdown of RAW foods and some brands that we like !!!!



BEST	FROZEN RAW	Pets4Life, Primal, Stella and Chewy's, Nature's Variety, Congo, Big Country Raw
BETTER	FREEZE DRIED RAW	Primal, Stella and Chewy's, Nature's Variety
GOOD	DE-HYDRATED RAW	NRG, Honest Kitchen, SoJo's

Top 5 Myths about Raw Diets:

Feeding RAW means I throw raw food on the ground and let them go. False! There are many, many wonderful companies that sell RAW food at the same pet food store that sells kibble. (see our list above)

Dogs have adapted & live longer with commercial food diets. False! Dogs have NOT adapted to a commercial food diet, as evidenced by the millions of pets sitting in the waiting rooms of veterinary clinics with periodontal disease, skin diseases, cancers, organ diseases, diabetes and obesity.

Raw Food diets are not balanced. False! Raw food diets that include a variety of bones and organ meat contain the proper nutrients and ARE balanced. Raw foods contain the exact proportions of fat, protein, vitamins, minerals and enzymes that a dog needs

Raw Diets are inconvenient and expensive. False! There are MANY companies who make it so easy to feed RAW-it can be simple as it is to pour kibble into a bowl.

Bacteria in raw meat is dangerous to my dog or to my family. False! When prepared responsibly-no differently than you would do when your family prepares raw meat for your supper-a raw diet is a safe option for your dog and your family

If however you would prefer to feed a kibble...we sure do have some suggestions for some good ones!

It is VERY hard to find a store purchased grain free food that has absolutely none of the ingredients in the high glysemic index chart above, however... the kibbles that we have used in our Canadian rescue and have had lots of success with are:

- [Horizon Pulsar Fish Formula](#)
- [Horizon Legacy Fish](#)
- [Nature's Variety Instinct Salmon](#)
- [Nutrisca Salmon](#)
- [EVO Herring and Salmon](#)
- [Canine Caviar Wild Ocean Grain Free](#)
- [Big Country Raw](#)

Also, be very strict with any treats you give him. The smallest piece of the wrong thing can make him itchy for at least 3 weeks.

Some good treats are

- [NRG Jerky Strips](#) are made of 100% edible table quality chicken and salmon meat. No potato, no filler.
- [Honest Kitchen Wishes](#)... made with 100% wild caught Haddock

We would be very remiss right now if we did not say in big, bold print...**NO TREATS FROM CHINA, EVER** ...such as dehydrated Chicken, Duck and Sweet Potato- we have already lost one lovely Westie boy because his family unknowingly was feeding him tainted treats.

Use a Calendar: We strongly suggest that you keep a calendar handy that just has your Westies' health info on it. When you record daily changes, changes to foods, snacks or treats, changes with tummy upsets, scale of itchiness, etc... very often you will begin to see patterns that will help you when treating your dog.



this was Sammy on Aug 19th



and this was Sammy on September 27th

Shampoo: It is VERY important to bath your itchy Westie...you must get the bacteria and yeast spores off the skin. We would suggest a bath every other day until the yeasty smell starts to dissipate and then every 3rd or 4th day till you see that the skin is looking less "angry". If the problem is over most of the body you may want to shave or trim them down, you'll waste less shampoo and they will dry faster. Use cool water and towel dry only, do not use a hair dryer.

and remember.....NO oatmeal shampoo or conditioner... EVER!!!!

The shampoos that we use and like are:

- Chlorhexadine (you get this at the Vet)
- Nizoral (you get that at a drug store)
- Dermacton (ordering info is below)

Bath Time: wet your Westie and then lather them up-leave the shampoo on your Westie for at least 10-15 minutes. Keep them in the tub or wrap them in a towel and hold them (please don't put them cold and wet in a crate to lick the shampoo off!!!!!!)

After the 10-15 minutes, rinse off all the shampoo and make sure there is no shampoo residue. While still in the tub, finish off with an Apple Cider Vinegar (ACV) solution on them. (Instructions are below)

Please Note: YOU DO NOT RINSE the ACV solution off!!!

Natural organic apple cider vinegar has a brownish tinge to it and floating stuff inside. The floating stuff is called "mother" and is formed from the pectin and apple residue. You can purchase natural organic apple cider vinegar at most health food store. Put about ¼ of a cup of ACV in a plastic measuring cup and fill the cup with warm water. After the bath, pour the rinse (from the neck on down-do NOT get this in your Westie's eyes) and then towel dry---don't rinse it off. It is a great and natural way to improve the PH balance on their skin.



Foot Soaks- does your Westie lick it's paws??????????? We can not stress the importance of removing pesticides, herbicides, ragweed, grasses, pollens, molds, dust mites and other pollutants from your dog's feet on a regular basis.

Your dog's feet can gather a pretty heavy toxin load in addition to allergens, and this can become extremely irritating to his paws. 50% of all foot licking and chewing can be immediately alleviated by removing allergens and other irritants collected on a dog's paws. It is important is to soak the paws at the end of any day when your pet has been in contact with allergens, lawn chemicals, or anything in the environment with the potential to irritate her feet.

You will need:

- a small tub or Tupperware container
- Povidone iodine (also known as Betadine Antiseptic Solution) is an organic iodine that is safe, non-toxic, antifungal, antibacterial, and anti-yeast. There are two types of Betadine ...one is a surgical scrub/skin cleanser that needs to be rinsed off.... the one you want is the **Betadine Antiseptic Solution**
- water

You want to dilute the povidone iodine with water to the color of iced tea, using just your eyes – no scientific formula is involved! If it comes up too light, just add a bit more of the iodine...if it's a bit dark, add more water. We recommend you let your Westie stand in the solution from two to five minutes. You don't have to do anything to the feet or toes -- the solution will do the work for you. You can just stand and sing to your Westie while he soaks, or talk to him and tell him how handsome he is.



Remember, the key is to get the feet submerged in the solution, which will wash away any type of yeast that might be growing, as well as mild bacterial infections, allergens, and other contaminants. Dry them off and they are good to go!



This was Sugar on July 5th



and this was Sugar on August 19th

Lotions and Potions: We have found a product that we have used on our itchy Westies that has been great for us. It is in a shampoo, cream and spray form and it has worked wonderfully well to give our dogs relief. It is called [Dermacton](#) and can be purchased in Canada from [The Healthy Dog Store](#).

Supplements: The “go to” info and products that we refer to very often are products by Mercola and info from Dr. Karen Becker. Dr Becker is a Vet that has produced some great videos and we use their products as well.

Mercola has some wonderful products that we have used:

- Digestive Enzyme
- Complete probiotics-this is especially important if your Westie is ever given anti-biotics. It is very important to make sure you add a probiotic while they are on the any antibiotic and for 2 weeks afterwards.
- Krill Oil
- Spirugreen

A store in Ontario has brought in the Mercola products (so glad we do not have to order from the US any longer) and has put together for us a **Westie Skin Repair Kit**. It is a wonderful kit and we can not thank them enough for doing this and also for offering any of our Westies in Need folks a discount when ordering supplements. We use all these products on our itchy Westies!!!!!!

The Kit includes:

- Mercola SpiruGreen (anti-oxidant) –Immune Support
- Mercola Digestive Enzymes – Improved Digestion
- Mercola Complete Probiotics – Healthy Bacterial Flora
- Mercola Krill Oil (omega 3) - Essential for healthy skin
- Colloidal Silver – effective against yeast and bacteria



To order the kit please contact [The Healthy Dog Store](http://TheHealthyDogStore.com) at 647-933-9034

or at fillmybowl@thehealthydogstore.ca and they will ship the products to you if you are unable to pick it up at their store...or if you shop online use the promo code "winfriend". It will apply your 10% discount to any supplement, [including kits like the Itchy Skin Kit](#).

So.....it is now time to become an active Westie Mom or Dad.....we think it is very important for each and every pet owner to have a good relationship with their Vet. Some Vets may view proactive or preventive veterinary medicine as mundane and even we pet parents aren't often heard thanking our Vet for keeping our pet healthy. But in the big picture, isn't preventing a problem at least as important as treating it?

Westies in Need feels that preventing a Westie from becoming sick is the essence of caring for that animal. Your Vet should not just be the person that you go to when your dog is ill or for vaccinations.

The health of your Westie is ultimately your responsibility and we encourage each of you to become proactive in your pet's care. As a pet parent, the health and quality of life of your companion animal is always up to you. No matter how active a role your Vet plays in keeping your dog well, ultimately, your Westie's health is your responsibility.

So...to summarize....your Westie is itchy and you don't know what to do...

1. Call us...day or night...call us!
2. Take your Westie to the Vet and get blood work done with the full thyroid panel. **Make sure when you get the results from the Vet you get a copy for your records**

3. Next....call us...day or night...call us and scan or fax us the results and lets chat about the findings. We can help to formulate a plan for you to discuss with your Vet.

We know Westies; we know what has worked for our breed and what has not. We have had great results with skin- we can help and walk you through what needs to be done.

This is VERY fixable, we promise.

