



www.stripedbandits.com

This issue is dedicated to Miss Thelma Simmons
2001 – 2009

Inflammation in Domestic Skunks

What is Inflammation

Inflammation is a condition caused by the swelling of any part of the body. Areas commonly affected in domestic skunks are the limbs, joints, and internal organs. Inflammation of the skin may occur if the skunk has an allergic reaction, has been bitten, or is injured.

So what comes first, inflammation or the inflammatory condition?

Inflammation can be a healthy body's way of responding to an injury or illness. Inflammation occurs when the immune system has identified a problem and is attempting to correct it by sending in special cells that speed healing. For instance, if your skunk is nipped by another pet, pain or swelling are actually signs that his immune system is working properly to heal the affected body part. A healthy skunk's body can correctly regulate the intensity of its response to the problem.

Sometimes the body is not in optimal health and the immune system over reacts to the problem by not pulling back when the crisis is over. Healthy tissue may be affected by the body's aggressive defense, possibly causing more damage than the original health issue. An example of this would be a skunk with a herniated disc. Immediately after the disc ruptures, the body starts trying to repair the damage. There is a crucial point where the repair work needs to end. If the body does not shut down the repair work at the correct time, the continued attempts may result in calcium deposits which may possibly fuse the vertebrae. Fused vertebrae are not only extremely painful for the skunk but will eventually result in some degree of paralysis.

Chronic inflammation, if not identified and corrected, will lead to more serious health issues as the immune system becomes weaker and less able to defend against illness or disease. Aleutian Disease Virus, or ADV, is a mutated parvo virus that causes a varied immune response in skunks. ADV is an example of an extremely inflammatory type of disease. The virus itself does very little damage to the body but causes a huge increase in antibodies called gamma globulins in the blood. These antibodies combine to form plaque-like compounds that are deposited within the tissues of multiple organs such as the kidneys, liver, bile ducts, spinal cord, gastrointestinal tract, blood vessels and bladder, resulting in inflammation and will eventually shut down the affected organs.

Causes of Inflammation

As mentioned earlier, one type of inflammation is the body's attempt to speed healing of an injury and a common reason for inflammation to be present in skunks. This type of inflammation is not a concern in the healthy skunk.

The number one controllable cause of inflammation in pet skunks is diet. It is vital the skunk be fed a species appropriate diet, i.e., as close as possible to what they would eat in the wild. Skunks fed processed pet foods such as kibble will not be as healthy as one fed a species appropriate diet. Kibble damages the skunk's teeth which were meant to tear flesh, not crush hard foods. Bacteria enter the body via the damaged teeth. Not only are dental problems common in skunks fed kibble, heart disease is also common. All processed foods are inflammatory. Processed foods are defined as food that has been changed from its natural state. This includes foods containing grains including wheat, corn, rice, oats, or any other grains that are not on a skunk's food chain. It also includes soy based foods which are not recommended for three reasons: most soy products are genetically modified unless organically grown; soy is used to bulk up livestock quickly and skunks rarely need to put on weight; Soy protein is less digestible and a poor substitute for animal protein for skunks. Skunks have no dietary requirement for carbohydrates. This is another reason foods containing grains are not appropriate.

Inflammatory illnesses such as ADV, which has become more common in domestic skunks born after 2003, can cause long term chronic inflammation. Because each animal's immune system is affected differently, some skunks exposed to ADV never show clinical signs and others are symptomatic and affected in varying degrees and still others go downhill rapidly. I believe diet plays a huge role in the progression of ADV in skunks.

Vaccinations given too often may also contribute to inflammation in the domestic skunk. There are no vaccines specifically made for skunks. In most cases, a large dog is given the same amount of vaccine as a tiny skunk. This doesn't mean vaccinations are not needed for your skunk. Current vaccination recommendations for skunks are Merial Purevax canine distemper at 10 weeks and again at 14 weeks. Galaxy D by Shering-Plough may be used if Purevax is not available. Feline vaccines are not recommended as there are no documented cases of skunks coming down with Feline Panleukopenia. Rabies vaccines are not required for domestic skunks and not recommended. They are 'off label' and will not protect your skunk if a bite is reported. Annual vaccinations are not recommended. Your vet can take a blood sample at the annual wellness exam and request titers be run to verify the skunk is still protected before further vaccinations are done. Vaccinosis is not uncommon in cases where skunks have been given annual, or multiple, combination vaccines.

Maria Ellis
7-15-2009



Did You Know?



A skunk's normal body temperature is 95 – 98.6 degrees F

Featured Product

Supplement Profile: Serrapeptase



Serrapeptase is a proteolytic enzyme that digests inflammatory tissue. It was originally found in the intestines of Silk Worms who used it to make an opening so the moths could exit the cocoon. Serrapeptase has been used in Europe and Asia for more than 25 years as an alternative to potentially dangerous NSAIDs. Unlike these drugs, Serrapeptase is naturally occurring and does not cause gastrointestinal side effects. Serrapeptase is the strongest anti-inflammatory enzyme available. It digests non-living tissue such as blood clots, cysts, arterial plaque and inflammation in all forms. There are no known contraindications with drugs. In cases of bacterial infections, the use of Serrapeptase along with an antibiotic may result in increasing the effectiveness of the antibiotic.

Pain relief is a benefit of Serrapeptase's ability to dissolve dead tissue and block pain inducing amines. Serrapeptase breaks down the tissue into harmless Amino Acids which the body removes as waste. It literally digests the inflammatory tissue.

One of the leading causes of disease is chronic inflammation caused by eating a diet high in carbohydrates, and processed foods. When we have chronic inflammation it leads to free radical damage which causes the platelets to stick together and clot. Chronic inflammation is almost always accompanied by tissue destruction. Serrapeptase goes to work dissolving the dead tissue which means increased blood flow to the affected body parts. The increase in blood flow means the cells are better able to function and the body can complete the healing process.

Serrapeptase is beneficial to many health conditions. Various studies recommend Serrapeptase for the following conditions:

1. Pain of any kind.
2. Arthritis and all bone, joint and disc problems.
3. Headaches and Migraines caused by inflammation.
4. Lung problems - Emphysema, Bronchitis, Asthma, etc.
5. Eye problems.
6. Sinus problems, allergies, infection, etc.
7. Injuries, swelling, post operative swellings and wounds that are not healing.
8. Inflammation of any kind: inflammatory bowel diseases; or muscles e.g. Fibromyalgia.
9. Autoimmune illnesses.
10. Cardiovascular Disease.

There are very few illnesses or injuries that will not benefit from Serrapeptase supplementation. Serrapeptase can even be taken if you have nothing wrong as inflammation is related to premature aging.

Serrapeptase, in the form of Serraflyzyme from Cardiovascular Research Ltd., is the brand I prefer to use for pain relief in my pets as NSAIDs are not recommended to give to skunks. It is enteric coated and the small 5 mg tablet is easy to give. Serrapeptase is most effective when enteric coated as the enzyme is affected by stomach acid. While 5 mg, twice per day may seem a large dose for a skunk, it is usually given with meals so some of the enzyme will be used to digest the protein in the meal.

Featured Skunks

Ursulla

I was recently contacted about two girls, Ursulla, age 4 and a 2 year old. Their owner was desperate to find them a suitable home. It seems she had been trying for a year to find the girls a home, but for one reason or another, none were what she wanted for her girls. Now she was getting desperate and at the suggestion of a friend, contacted me. Fourteen hours later, they were in their new home.

Not that it mattered to us, but the previous owner kept assuring me that the girls were happy and healthy and had been on the best of diet and had excellent vet care. Thankfully the previous owner did believe in bringing the girls to the vet and provided all their vet records. Unfortunately, the vet wasn't very good.

Ursulla was subjected to a battery of tests to determine what was causing a breakout on her back. The vet diagnosed ringworm and prescribed a chemical dip and the owner was sent home with more of the chemical dip to administer at home. Cultures were taken, the results were not in yet, but they shaved her back and the dip was done anyway. The cultures came back negative for anything at all.

I'm not sure what sort of cultures were done, because flash forward one week and we have Ursulla at our vet to get to the bottom of what is going on with her back. A very simple test determined she has a combination staff bacteria and yeast. The treatment is long. She will be on an anti fungal (Fluconazole) for 2 months and an antibiotic (Convenia) for one month. After one month, she will be re-evaluated for further treatment.

The pictures below show Ursulla's "saddle back" look from the shaving. The picture on the right is what the patches on her back look like. The first time we saw the patches, there were tiny black bumps, but they are gone now.



Ursulla acts like nothing is wrong. Her back doesn't seem to bother her. She doesn't miss a meal and is very curious about her new surroundings. She is still a bit skittish about her new humans, but is happy that she discovered an outstretched open hand often times means a treat can be found in the hand.

Her trip to the vet seems to have reinforced the fact that she is home now. Despite having a traumatic day, she didn't hide like some do when they return from the vet. She was still out looking for that outstretched open hand and exploring her new surroundings.

Mary Vice
August 2, 2009

You can contact us if you need to re-home your skunk.
We can help you at no charge if you want to adopt a skunk.

Fun Tips

This month's tip may seem like more of a feeding tip than a fun tip, but the truth be told, it is both! Sometimes when a new skunk comes into your home, he or she may not be impressed with the new diet you are offering. Skunks being skunks, they always want things on their own terms. We have found if you pretend you don't want them to have something, they want it more. By playing a little tug of war game, it is fun for both you and the skunk and you have allowed them to think they got away with something, making it all the more irresistible to them.

Mary Vice
August 2, 2009



If you would like your skunk to be featured in our newsletter, send a story and pictures to: StripedBandits@yahoo.com

Recipe of the Month

Protein Truffles

3 Tablespoons peanut butter creamy or chunky
1 scoop (10 teaspoons) whey powder
Honey optional

Mix peanut butter and whey powder. If mixture is very dry, add a little honey and mix thoroughly. Use a 1/2 teaspoon measuring spoon to scoop out mixture. Form each scoop into a truffle and roll in ground flax to coat. Makes about 18 servings. Approximately 24 calories per truffle. Keep refrigerated. A smaller version can be made to hide medications or supplements in.



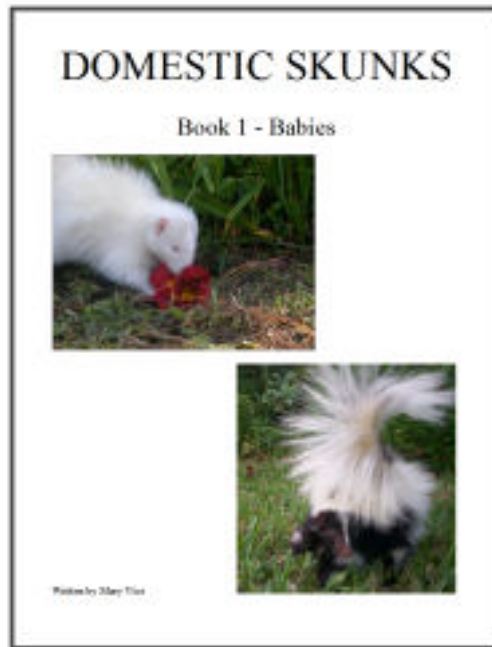
Maria Ellis, July 13, 2009

Now Available For Purchase! Domestic Skunks, Book 1 – Babies

~ Testimonial from a happy customer ~

I love your book. I'm getting my first baby skunk in the next 2 weeks and I can't wait. Your book is the best I've seen. Please can you email me when you have books 2, 3 and 4.

Many thanks,
Patricia



\$15.50 each (includes domestic USA postage)

Contact me at stripedbandits@yahoo.com or

Paypal your payment using the stripedbandits@yahoo.com account.

Question for Ashlar



Do you have a question you would like answered in a future issue?

Go to www.stripedbandits.com and fill out the question form.

Skunk Shows

Skunksberry Inn Skunkie Fun Day

is being held on October 10, 2009

Givhan's Ferry State Park, Ridgeville, SC

For information and registration form contact Landa Berry at mberry2@sc.rr.com.

THE 21ST ANNUAL SKUNKS AS PETS SHOW

Sponsored by FLORIDA SKUNKS AS PETS,
In Conjunction With THE FLORIDA SKUNK RESCUE

When: Saturday, October 3, 2009

Where: LaPlaya Resort, Daytona Beach, Florida

Phone 1-800-874-7420 for reservations for the SKUNKS AS PETS group.

Or call 386-672-0990, and tell them you are with SKUNKS AS PETS.

Reserve your room by September 11, 2009 to get special room rate \$55 + tax.

ROOM RATE INCLUDES BREAKFAST

(Group rate reservations cannot be made via the Internet.)

If there is a topic you would like to see on the newsletter, contact me at stripedbandits@yahoo.com.

If you want to be removed from this mailing, please let me know at stripedbandits@yahoo.com.

