

Dandruff And Skin Sores On Guinea Pig

Does a vitamin C deficiency cause skin sores on a guinea pig?

By Karen Rosenthal, DVM, DABVP

Posted: April 2, 2008, 2a.m. EDT

Q: I have several guinea pigs. One of them has been having sores on her and a very bad case of dandruff. I was told that if they have sores it is probably a vitamin C deficiency. What do you think?

A: Vitamin C is essential for guinea pigs because, unlike almost all other animals, they cannot make it themselves. Vitamin C deficiency can manifest itself in various forms. There can be an overall sickly appearance to your pet, a very scruffy haircoat, swollen joints or teeth that "rotate" in the mouth, entrapping the tongue.

What you describe may or may not be related to vitamin C deficiency. Regardless, you should supplement vitamin C daily to your guinea pig. But you should also visit your veterinarian to make sure that other diseases are not present. Also, guinea pigs that lack vitamin C can have a decreased immune system and are prone to secondary diseases that need treatment beyond vitamin C supplementation.