

Diagnosis	Signalment	History	Physical Exam	Dermatologic Exam	First-Line Diagnostic(s)
Inflammatory					
Infectious (bacterial, fungal, parasitic)					
Folliculitis	Any age or breed	Often pruritic , may be secondary to allergies or endocrine disease	Generally systemically well	Papules, pustules, crusts, patchy alopecia, follicular distribution	Impression smear cytology, skin scrape, bacterial culture, DTM
Neoplastic					
Paraneoplastic Alopecia	Middle-aged to older cats	Rapid onset, nonpruritic , may have weight loss, lethargy, or anorexia associated with pancreatic carcinoma	May have palpable abdominal mass	Ventral alopecia, characteristic smooth/shiny skin	Skin biopsy, abdominal ultrasound with pancreatic mass +/- metastases
Exfoliative Dermatitis and Thymoma	Middle-aged to older cats	Nonpruritic , may have weight loss, lethargy, or anorexia associated with thymoma	May be normal	Marked scaling and flaking, patchy alopecia	Skin biopsy, thoracic radiographs with mediastinal mass
Non-Inflammatory					
Traumatic					
Self-Trauma (Allergic Dermatitis)	An age or breed	Seasonal or year-round pruritus	Generally systemically well	Self-induced alopecia/hypotrichosis, papules/crusts with secondary infection	Trichogram (broken hair shafts), allergy evaluation
Mechanical/Friction (Skin Folds)	Brachycephalics	Often associated with odor, recurrent skin fold infections	Generally systemically well	Alopecia and erythema in folds	Based on conformation, cytology for secondary infections
Endocrine					
Canine Hyperadrenocorticism	Middle-aged to older dogs, often small breed	Nonpruritic , gradual hair loss, PU/PD/PP, panting, recurrent skin infections	Pot-belly, hepatomegaly, muscle wasting	Bilaterally symmetric truncal alopecia, hyperpigmentation, comedones, thin skin, calcinosis cutis	Low-Dose Dexamethasone Suppression Test
Canine Hypothyroidism	Middle-aged dogs, often large breed	Nonpruritic , gradual onset of hair loss, mental dullness, lethargy, weight gain, cold intolerance, recurrent skin infections	Overconditioned, tragic expression	Bilaterally symmetric truncal alopecia, poor/dull coat, scaling/seborrhea, "rat tail"	Thyroid panel (Total T4, Free T4, TSH)
Feline Hyperthyroidism	Older cats	Nonpruritic , weight loss despite polyphagia, hyperactivity/vocalization, PU/PD, vomiting/diarrhea	Thyroid slip, muscle wasting, +/- heart murmur, gallop rhythm, tachycardia	Unkempt coat, increased shedding, self-induced alopecia from overgrooming, rapid claw growth	Total T4, +/- Free T4
Follicular Arrest Syndrome	Young-middle aged, plush-coated breeds	Nonpruritic , gradual, progressive onset of hair loss, generally lacking systemic signs of endocrinopathy	Generally systemically well	Bilateral truncal alopecia, "puppy coat", varied hyperpigmentation	Diagnosis of exclusion, r/o endocrinopathy, skin biopsy
Gonadal Sex Hormone Disorders	Intact dogs	Nonpruritic , gradual, progressive onset of hair loss, often lack systemic signs	Assess for asymmetry, enlargement, or masses of external genitalia, mammary development	Generalized or regional truncal alopecia	Supporting clinical findings, imaging of testis/ovaries
Follicular Dysplasia and Hair Cycle Arrest Disorders					
Pattern Baldness	Predisposed breeds, onset often < 1yr of age	Nonpruritic , slowly progressive alopecia, hair thinning progressing to total alopecia	Generally systemically well	Symmetric alopecia at predictable sites: ventrum, pinnae, or caudal thighs	Pattern recognition, trichogram (normal epilation with miniaturization of hairs)
Canine Follicular Dysplasia	Many breeds, age of onset and distribution of hair loss varies	Nonpruritic , hair loss in areas of trauma (e.g., collar region or excessive grooming), slowly progressive	Generally systemically well	Hair coat dry and frizzy, change in coat color, loss of primary hairs with retention of secondary hairs	Trichogram (hair shaft defects), skin biopsy (diagnostic)
Post-Clipping Follicular Arrest	Plush-coated breeds	Nonpruritic , failure to regrow hair after clipping	Generally systemically well	Alopecia limited to clipped area, underlying skin normal, normal appearing hair on rest of body	Pattern recognition
Color Dilution Alopecia	Blue and Fawn Dobermans, many other breeds	Nonpruritic , may have secondary infections	Generally systemically well	Alopecia/hypotrichosis limited to dilute-colored areas	Trichogram (melanin aggregates), skin biopsy (diagnostic)
Canine Flank Alopecia	Adult-onset in Boxers and other breeds	Nonpruritic , recurrent episodes in fall/winter	Generally systemically well	Well-demarcated alopecic patches on flanks/thoracolumbar, may become hyperpigmented	Pattern recognition, skin biopsy (diagnostic)