

Veterinary Specialists Inc.

Millie Rosales, DVM DACVD

EOSINOPHILIC GRANULOMA COMPLEX

Eosinophilic granuloma complex (EGC) is a group of skin lesions that affect the skin, mucocutaneous junctions, and oral cavity of cats. Within EGC are the eosinophilic granuloma, eosinophilic plaque, and eosinophilic ulcer (rodent ulcer or indolent ulcer). A combination of the three may occur in one cat at the same time.

It is important to remember that EGC is NOT a final diagnosis or a specific disease, but only a reaction pattern in cats. In fact, there is a primary cause. The most common cause for EGC is allergies, with the most common allergy being flea allergic dermatitis. In some instances, these lesions may be heritable.

TYPES OF EGC:

Eosinophilic granuloma:

This lesion is commonly seen on the skin, mucocutaneous, and oral cavity of cats. On the skin, they may be raised, firm, and yellow to pink with a distinct linear configuration. Some may have a nodular configuration. Eosinophilic granuloma is the most common cause of lower lip swellings and nodules, and asymptomatic swollen chins in the cat.

Eosinophilic plaque:

This lesion is a very common skin lesion of cats. Most usually occur on the abdomen and inside thighs. These lesions are usually raised, round to oval, red, oozing and often ulcerated.

Itchiness is usually SEVERE.

Indolent ulcer:

This lesion commonly occurs on one side of the upper lip. These lesions are well circumscribed, red-brown, hairless and glistening; they may have a raised border. Itchiness and pain are rare.

Diagnosis: An EGC may be suspected on clinical examination, but sometimes a biopsy of the lesion is required to rule out other causes.

Treatment: Treatment for EGC usually involves resolving any secondary infections and looking for an underlying cause. Systemic glucocorticoids (steroids) are often effective with these lesions. We may initially recommend oral steroids before considering injectable steroids. A thorough investigation for an underlying cause is important to prevent reoccurrence of the lesion.

Since flea allergy is the most common cause (95%), a strict flea control program will be discussed with you. If flea allergy is eliminated as a cause then other allergies as food allergy and atopy (pollen allergy) can be investigated further.