



# Dermatology Clinic *for* Animals

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<https://dcfawa.com>

## Juvenile Cellulitis

**Also Known As:** Puppy strangles, juvenile pyoderma

**Transmission or Cause:** The exact cause is unknown although there seems to be a dysfunction in the immune system of affected animals, since they respond to immunosuppressive medications. It is believed that there is also a genetic component, as juvenile cellulitis is more common in certain breeds and families.



**Affected Animals:** Puppies 3 weeks to 6 months of age are most commonly affected; it is only very rarely seen in adult dogs. Although juvenile cellulitis can affect any breed, Golden retrievers, Dachshunds, and Labrador retrievers are predisposed. One or more puppies in the litter may be affected.

**Clinical signs:** Initial signs include swelling of the face (eyelids, lips and muzzle), that progresses to draining pustules and crusts. The ear flaps and ear canals are often swollen and ooze pus. The lymph nodes often become swollen, especially those behind the jaw. The lesions may be painful and some puppies are lethargic, have a fever and won't eat.

**Diagnosis:** Diagnosis is made by history and physical examination, and by ruling out other similar skin diseases such as severe bacterial, fungal, or parasitic skin infection. Skin biopsies and cultures may be required for definitive diagnosis.

**Prognosis:** With early and aggressive treatment the prognosis is good. Depending on the severity of disease, affected dogs are sometimes left with permanent scarring. Recurrence is rare.

**Treatment:** High doses of oral steroids are typically given until skin lesions have resolved. The steroids are then slowly tapered to monitor for relapse. There are commonly secondary bacterial skin infections so antibiotics are also usually prescribed. Topical therapies such as warm water soaks can also be helpful.

**Prevention:** Neutering and spaying any dogs that have had the disease will help prevent the predisposition for the disease from being passed on.

