Cytology literally means the study of cells. In our dermatology clinic we include in this the identification of various microscopic parasites. This is an extremely powerful tool in our investigation of what is happening at the microscopic level on your pet’s skin.

We are able to collect samples from your pet using a variety of techniques and examine them immediately.

### Sample collection

We use a number of different techniques to collect samples from the skin for examination. These include acetate tape strips – where clear sticky tape is applied to skin a number of times. Whilst this technique looks simple it actually strips the entire outer dead layer of skin (Stratum corneum) off and with it any bacteria, yeast or inflammatory cells for examination and quantification. Skin scrapings may be done using a scalpel blade to identify parasites living in the deeper layers of the skin. Fine needle aspirates are used to collect samples from deep in tissue to identify some tumor types. All samples can be examined immediately by our dermatologists to help them identify the cause of your pet’s problem and track response to treatment.

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Looking for different things

Parasites

Demodex
Scabies (Sarcoptes)
Fur mite (Lynxacarus)

Bacteria

Cocci
Rods
Intracellular bacteria

Yeast / fungi

Malassezia
Candida
Fungal hyphae

Autoimmune disease

Pemphigus – showing acantholytic cells, no bacteria and nonactivated neutrophils

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