

Specialty Dermatology Care Brings Life-Changing Relief

Jennie Tait's thorough history collection and examination provided long-awaited answers for a severely itchy patient and her human family.

Bonnie had been itching for months. The 11-year-old female spayed Shih Tzu was referred to a specialty dermatology clinic in April 2026, roughly half a year after her acute onset of itching. The severity? A 10/10, living in the “cone of shame” to prevent self-trauma.

Her initial provider covered many of the basic interventions: several anti-itch medications, antihistamines, ear medications, antibiotics, gabapentin, and even a restricted hydrolyzed diet trial. None provided relief. To make matters worse, Bonnie's human family members began to itch too.

Enter Jennie Tait. As a veterinary technician specialist at a dermatology clinic, Tait took on the case, conducting a full review of Bonnie's medical history and current situation. The owners wrote that Bonnie's condition started after an itchy pet visited their home. Once it left, Bonnie started imitating that itch. Not too long thereafter, the humans started itching too. Tait noted that there was no history of flea, tick, or other parasite prevention. “At this point,” Tait says, “it's glaring to me that it's parasitic and it's zoonotic.”

Then Tait saw Bonnie for her appointment and conducted a physical examination. “When I saw poor Bonnie, she had those classic golden crusts all over her pinnae and all over her body.”

Tait knew right way: It was sarcoptic mange. She needed to perform a skin scraping to confirm her suspicion. When relaying this information to the clients, Tait says,



PROVIDER

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PATIENT

Bonnie, 11-year-old female
spayed Shih Tzu

“they broke down in tears of relief and appreciation.”

Tait reviewed the test and confirmed with her veterinarian the diagnosis and treatment plan of isoxazolines. They finally had the answer and solution Bonnie and her family were seeking. Tait and her

veterinarian were thrilled—so much so that they admittedly broke out into dance.

“It's such a simple fix for such a terrible quality of life,” Tait says. “We love when we get *Sarcoptes* in our referral clinic because we can fix it. In a couple of days, we know they are going to be so much better. So much we do in dermatology is management versus cure. It feels really good to be able to provide that cure.”

So how had sarcoptic mange gone unrecognized for so long? Tait says they missed the dermatology “golden rule” to rule out parasites. Tait says this case is an important reminder of the power of a thorough history, exam, client communication, and One Health considerations.

While not lifesaving in the literal sense, Tait acknowledges this case was life-changing for both Bonnie and her human family members—who received treatment from their human healthcare provider.

“You never know every single day the impact you're going to have on someone's life,” Tait says. “And with poor Bonnie, I think we had a pretty good impact on her and her humans' lives. Doing what you feel is your regular day-to-day can have way more impact than you realize.”

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