

Can we pre-wet cats prior to a lime sulfur dip?

Can we pre-wet or bathe a cat prior to a lime sulfur dip for ringworm treatment? Dr. Ellis explains why this practice is not recommended and offers alternative tips.

Question:

I volunteer at the local shelter caring for kittens in their ringworm isolation facility. In your guidebook you say “do not prewet the animal.” Can you tell me why? The instructions say to bathe the animal first. We have found that it is very hard to get the fur wet down to the skin with just the lime sulfur solution. Thanks much.

Answer:

Hi,

Thanks for consulting our [Ringworm Guidebook](#). There are two reasons we do not recommend pre-wetting animals prior to a lime sulfur dip.

1) *It can dilute the lime sulfur solution.*

The appropriate concentration of lime sulfur recommended for treating ringworm is 8oz/gallon. By pre-wetting cats, you are adding water and therefore diluting the solution, possibly making it less effective. This could potentially increase the time to cure and therefore increase all other associated costs and risk.

2) *It makes it hard to know if we are applying the lime sulfur well.*

By pre-wetting the fur, it becomes difficult, or even impossible, to make sure the lime sulfur dip is being applied uniformly and all the way down to the skin, since it becomes hard to distinguish the solution from the previous bath or pre-wetting. Therefore, you could be misled into thinking you've dipped the whole cat or applied it all the way to the skin, when in reality, we are no more efficient than before.

The most common issues we encounter with lime sulfur dips are the setup and the equipment used. To make your process efficient and safe for both the animals and staff/volunteers, we recommend doing dips in teams of two, with one person applying the dip while the second is in

charge of restraint.

Many shelters will use regular spray bottles to apply the dip, which can work, but they are often tedious and can lead to uneven application. We recommend using a handheld garden sprayer which allows a more constant stream. If the lime dip hasn't penetrated adequately, you can apply more and gently massage it in.

We don't recommend physically dipping the cats in a bath of lime sulfur, as this is both very stressful for the cat and increases the risk of cross-contamination with the next cat scheduled for its dip.

I hope this helps answer your question; please let us know if you have any other questions regarding management of ringworm.

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