

Exudative epidermitis (“Greasy pig disease”)

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Exudative epidermitis is a condition of young pigs caused by a Staphylococcal infection characterized by reddening of the skin and a greasy exudate that is frequently generalized. The bacteria can spread quickly with variable morbidity and mortality. Prompt recognition and treatment combined with appropriate management measures can limit the impact of the disease. This PowerPage reviews the important clinical features, treatment, and management considerations.

Pathophysiology

- Etiologic agent- *Staphylococcus hyicus*
 - Gram-positive, cocci
 - Produces an exfoliative toxin that cannot penetrate through intact skin
 - Often requires injuries or abrasions to cause disease
 - May be seen with concurrent skin diseases that damage the skin
- Animals affected
 - Primarily young pigs, 5-60 days
 - Older subclinical carriers can serve as a reservoir for the bacteria

Clinical Signs and Management

- Clinical Signs
 - Depression, anorexia, decreased growth
 - Thickened, red-spotted skin
 - Macules around eyes, lips, nose, ears progressing to vesicles or pustules
 - Exudation of serum/sebum
 - Progresses to entire body being covered with crusted exudates (“Greasy pig”)
 - Erosions of coronary band and heel
 - Younger suckling piglets are more likely suffer from acute, fatal symptoms
- Treatment
 - Many effective antibiotics, any one of the following:
 - Penicillins and cephalosporins
 - Aminoglycosides
 - Trimethoprim-sulfonamide, tylosin
 - Daily application of topical antiseptics improves success of treatment
- Management/Prevention
 - Treat exposed pigs with antibiotics for several days
 - Clip needle teeth of newborns
 - Soft bedding
 - Separate infected animals
 - Avoid mixing animals to decrease fight wounds