



MANGE (Sarcoptes and Cheyletiellosis)

What is Mange?

Sarcoptes mange is a nonseasonal, intensely itching, highly contagious parasitic skin disease of dogs caused by infestation with the mite, *Sarcoptes scabiei* var *canis*. The mites burrow through the superficial layers of the skin and cause intense itching by mechanical irritation, production of irritating by-products, and secretion of allergenic substances that produce a hypersensitivity reaction in sensitized dogs. Cheyletiellosis is a highly contagious parasitic skin disease of dogs, cats, and rabbits caused by infestation with *Cheyletiella* mites. Clinical signs of scaling and pruritus can mimic other, more common diseases. It is often referred to as “walking dandruff” due to the large mite size and excessive scaling. It is also called the “rabbit itch mite.” Human lesions can occur with both kinds of mite.

What are the Signs of Mange?

Sarcoptes is seen in dogs of all ages and breeds, and in multiple dog households, more than one dog usually will show symptoms. There is extremely intense pruritus (itching). Typically the dog will show hair loss and a red rash on elbows, hocks, ventral abdomen, and chest, and lesions on ear margins that range from barely perceptible scaling to bald spots or crusts (the ear canals are unaffected). Frequently bathed dogs may show chronic pruritus but have no skin lesions. There is minimal or no response to antiinflammatory doses of steroids (cortisone). Cheyletiellosis is often seen in young animals, and those frequently in contact with others, are most at risk. Common sources of infestation include animal shelters, breeders, and grooming establishments.

Skin scaling is the most important clinical sign of disease and is most severe in the chronically infested and debilitated animal. Cats may exhibit bizarre behavioral signs or excessive grooming as well as bilaterally symmetrical baldness. Pruritus can vary from none to severe, while cocker spaniels, poodles, and long-haired cats are common asymptomatic carriers.

How is it Diagnosed?

Superficial skin scrapings can be diagnostic, but mites and their eggs are extremely difficult to find, and false negative results are common. Sometimes the response to treatment is used to diagnose with Sarcoptes.

Examination of epidermal debris is very effective in diagnosing infestation of Cheyletiella mites. They are large and can be seen using a simple, handheld magnifying lens.

How is Mange Treated?

The most common type of treatment used is topical miticide dips at weekly intervals for up to 6-8 weeks.. Usually a favorable response will be seen in the first couple of weeks. Some doctors will use Ivermectin orally or by injection for Sarcoptic mange instead of dips. Some pets will require antibiotics for the secondary bacterial infection that can result from the intensive scratching. All animals in the household must be treated. Long coats may require clipping to facilitate treatment.

Environmental treatment with frequent cleanings and insecticide sprays is important to eliminate infestation. Combs, brushes, and grooming utensils should be discarded or thoroughly disinfected prior to reuse. Re-infestation may indicate contact with an asymptomatic carrier or the presence of an unidentified source of mites (e.g., untreated bedding).

People and Mange

People that come in close contact with an affected pet may develop a pruritic, papular rash on their arms, chest, or abdomen. Human lesions are usually transient and should resolve spontaneously after the affected pets have been treated. If the lesions on people persist, advice from a human dermatologist should be sought.

Thank you for this opportunity to serve you!