Physician. Sarcoptic mange is usually confirmed by taking a skin scraping and examining it under a microscope.

**Treatment and Control**

Dogs with sarcoptic mange require medication to kill the mites and additional treatment to soothe the skin and resolve related infections. Cleaning and treatment of the dog’s environment is also necessary.

**Demodectic Mange Mites**

**Mite Basics**

Demodectic mange caused by demodectic mange mites is mainly a problem in dogs. Demodectic mange mites are microscopic and not highly contagious. In general, demodex mites are not spread to other animals or across species. A mother dog, however, may pass the mites to her puppies.

**Diagnosis, Risks and Consequences**

Localized demodectic mange tends to appear in young dogs (usually less than 6 months old) as patches of scaly skin and redness around the eyes and mouth and, perhaps, the legs and trunk. Itching is not common with this type of mite infestation unless a secondary infection has occurred. Unlike other types of mange, demodectic mange may signal an underlying medical condition, and your pet’s overall health should be carefully evaluated. Less commonly, young and old dogs experience a more severe form of demodectic mange (generalized demodecosis) and can exhibit widespread patches of redness, hair loss, and scaly, thickened skin. Dogs with demodecosis can develop secondary bacterial infections which require additional treatment.

Cats are rarely infected with demodex mites, and the cat demodex mite is not the same as the dog demodex mite. Affected cats develop hair loss, crusts and scaly skin around the face, neck and eyelids, and may excessively groom the areas. They may also be more itchy than dogs affected by demodecites.

Demodecites mange is usually confirmed by taking a skin scraping and examining it under a microscope.

**Treatment and Control**

Your veterinarian will discuss treatment options with you. Treatment of dogs with localized demodecites mange generally results in favorable outcomes. Generalized demodecosis is more difficult to treat, and aggressive, extended treatment may be necessary.

**Important Points**

- Look for fleas, ticks, and coat abnormalities any time you groom your dog or cat or when you return home from areas that are likely to have higher numbers of these parasites.
- Consult your veterinarian if your pet excessively scratches, chews, or licks his/her coat, or persistently shakes his/her head or scratches his/her ears.
- Prompt treatment of parasites lessens your pet’s discomfort, decreases the chances of disease transmission, and may reduce the degree of home infestation.
- Discuss the health of all family pets with your veterinarian when one pet becomes infested. Some parasites cycle among pets, making control of infestations difficult unless other pets are considered. Consult your veterinarian before beginning treatment.
- Tell your veterinarian if you have attempted any parasite remedies, as this may impact your veterinarian’s recommendation.
- Always follow label directions carefully when using flea and tick preventives.
- Be especially careful when applying insecticides to cats, as cats are particularly sensitive to these products. Never use a product that is not approved for cats because the results could be lethal.
- Leave treatment to the experts. Your veterinarian offers technical expertise and can assist you in identifying products that are most likely to effectively and safely control your pet’s parasite problem.
FLEAS

Flea Basics

Fleas thrive when the weather is warm and humid. Depending on your climate, fleas may be a seasonal or year-round problem. Your pet can pick up fleas wherever an infestation exists, often in areas frequented by other cats and dogs. Adult fleas are dark brown, no bigger than a sesame seed, and able to move rapidly over your pet's skin.

Once the fleece becomes an adult, it spends virtually all of its time on your pet. Female fleas begin laying eggs within 24 hours of selecting your pet as a host, producing up to 50 eggs each day. These eggs fall from your pet onto the floor or furniture, including your pet's bed, or onto any other indoor or outdoor area where your pet happens to go. Tiny, worm-like larvae hatch from the eggs and burrow into carpets, under furniture, or into soil before spinning a cocoon. Immature ticks often feed on small, wild animals found in forests, prairies, and brush. Adult ticks seek larger hosts like dogs and cats, which venture into these habitats. Tick exposure may be seasonal, depending on geographic location. There are many different species of ticks that can affect dogs and cats.

Diagnosis, Risks and Consequences

Ticks are most often found around your dog's neck, in the ears, in the folds between the legs and the body, and between the toes, but they can be found anywhere on the body and are usually easily seen or felt. Cats may have ticks on their neck or face. Tick bites can cause skin irritation and heavy infestations can cause anemia in pets. An adult female tick can ingest up to 100 times her weight in blood! Ticks are capable of spreading serious infectious diseases such as Lyme disease, Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever, and many others to the pets and the people on which they feed. They can also cause tick paralysis. Disease risk varies by geographic area and tick species.

Treatment and Control

Prompt removal of ticks is very important because it lessens the chance of disease transmission from the tick to your pet. Remove ticks by carefully using tweezers to firmly grip the tick as close to the pet's skin as possible and gently and steadily pulling the tick free without twisting it or crushing the tick during removal. Crushing, twisting or jerking the tick out of the skin while its head is still buried could result in leaving the tick's mouth parts in your pet’s skin, which can cause a reaction and may become infected. After removing the tick, rinse it with soap and water, then cover it in a closed container and bring it to your veterinarian for identification. Prompt removal of ticks is very important because it lessens the chance of disease transmission from the tick to your pet. Remove ticks by carefully using tweezers to firmly grip the tick as close to the pet’s skin as possible and gently and steadily pulling the tick free without twisting it or crushing the tick during removal. Crushing, twisting or jerking the tick out of the skin while its head is still buried could result in leaving the tick’s mouth parts in your pet’s skin, which can cause a reaction and may become infected. After removing the tick, rinse it with soap and water, then cover it in a closed container and bring it to your veterinarian for identification.

TICKS

Tick Basics

Ticks are commonly found in wooded areas, brush, shrubs and wild vegetation, and any animal (or human, for that matter) that enters these environments is at risk of becoming a tick's host. Immature ticks often feed on small, wild animals found in forests, prairies, and brush. Adult ticks seek larger hosts like dogs and cats, which venture into these habitats. Tick exposure may be seasonal, depending on geographic location. There are many different species of ticks that can affect dogs and cats.

Diagnosis, Risks and Consequences

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