

important points

Option Four: Rinses such as DEMADDEX are applied diluted to the affected areas on a frequent basis. These products are massaged into the skin where the mites live. If used in very small dogs, it is necessary to only use at the recommended rate as poisoning can occur. Some breeds such as Chihuahuas are more susceptible to poisoning than others breeds because of their low bodyweight. Often antibiotic courses for several weeks are also required to suppress secondary bacterial infections.

Over the course of the treatment, it will be necessary to do repeated skin scrapings and revisits at specific times will be requested. This may all add significantly to the cost of treatment which may take up to four months to complete.

A small percentage of cases of Demodicosis never completely resolve and will require repeated treatment for the life of the dog. These cases usually do require long term antibiotic treatment, omega fatty acid supplements and specialized shampoo treatment.

- *If your puppy develops any balding patches it is best to get them checked.*
- *Demodicosis is not contagious to other dogs.*
- *Demodex mites do not infect people.*
- *Treatment for Demodicosis is almost always necessary.*
- *It is essential that you follow the treatment guideline recommended by your vet, and the scheduled revisits are necessary to determine the success of treatment, and length of time treatment needs to be continued.*
- *Demodicosis usually responds well to treatment, but occasionally will be impossible to cure.*

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demodectic mange in dogs

Client information series

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general information

Demodex Canis is a normal inhabitant of canine skin. It is found in small numbers in dogs with no clinical disease, however, it is capable of producing severe and recurrent skin disease in the right conditions.

The entire lifecycle of the mite is spent on the surface of the skin. The parasite resides within the hair follicles and occasionally the oil glands of the skin. The entire lifecycle takes from 18 to 35 days to complete. The eggs hatch into larvae which moult into nymphs and then again into adult mites. All stages of the cycle utilize host tissue fluid for survival.

Transmission of mites from dog to dog is usually seen in a litter situation where the mother transmits to the pups in the first couple of days of life. Pups up to 10 months seem more prone to infection from other infected dogs, however it usually takes several weeks of close contact for this to occur.

Spontaneous onset of Demodicosis in an adult dog is usually an indication of an

underlying disease process which may be suppressing the host immune system.

Some breeds of dogs (Shar Pei, Staffordshire Bull Terriers and Boxers) seem more prone to developing severe demodicosis, so there is thought to be a genetic link.

Poor nutrition age, other debilitating diseases and worm and flea burdens may all predispose a dog to develop Demodicosis.

Clinical Signs: Usually noticed first on the face and/ or front legs as focal areas of hair loss without irritation. The spots may seem to remain without change for some weeks, then either resolve or start to grow larger, or appear as other patches elsewhere.

Secondary bacteria may cause irritation and redness after the condition has been present for some time. Sometimes the problem will limit itself to the feet causing severe swelling and deep dermatitis of the entire foot area. These cases are often particularly resistant to treatment. Sometimes there will be more than one dog in a litter with the same type of skin problem.

Diagnosis: is based on history and clinical signs and then confirmed by deep skin scrapings which are examined under the microscope to demonstrate presence of significant numbers of mites in the skin. With dogs that have adult onset disease, it may be necessary to do other laboratory tests looking for underlying disease which may be involved.

Treatment: Very mild cases will occasionally spontaneously resolve without treatment, however most cases will require treatment. Dogs with generalized disease, especially with secondary infections or underlying disease will require treatment, sometimes for extended periods of time.

There are a few primary methods of treatment regularly used to treat demodex. Which is chosen by your vet usually depends on the position and severity of the skin lesions, the age of the dog and whether there is undercurrent disease.

Option One: Topical spot-on products are available which may help to resolve mild cases of demodecosis.

Option Two: A product called IVERMECTIN is used in carefully metered oral doses. This product is used in cattle and sheep drenches, but is not manufactured or licensed for use in dogs at this time. This is termed "Off Label prescription" and must be carefully controlled.

Option Three: Weekly injections of 'Dectomax' are given under the skin. This is another product used 'off label' for treatment in dogs but can be very effective. Courses are usually 6-8 weeks long, but depend on how well the dogs respond to treatment.