

ANIMAL HOSPITAL OF LANESVILLE

1849 Highway 11 Lanesville, IN 47136 (812) 952-3643

Mange and Your Dog

by Dr. Rene Wingerter

There are two types of mange in dogs. One is Sarcoptic Mange or "Red" mange, and the other is Demodectic or "Deep" mange. Demodex or Demodectic mange is a complicated disease. Demodex is not just caused by an **infection with a mange mite**; it also has a lot to do with your pet's ability to fight off disease.

The **immune system** is responsible for your pet's protection from disease. It keeps normal bacteria, viruses, and other organisms like mites from taking over the body. Some dogs have a better immune system than others. Factors such as nutrition and stress also play a role in their health.

Demodectic mites are normally present on most dogs' skin in small numbers. If a puppy's immune system doesn't keep the number in check, the mites can increase in population until they cause **hair loss, waxy, smelly skin, itching and infection**.

If your puppy has any type of hair loss, even without itching, he should be checked by your veterinarian and **tested for mites**. If your puppy has Demodectic mange, there are three possible outcomes: **the mange may resolve on its own, it may resolve after several treatments with a special dip, or it may recur over and over**.

About half of the cases will resolve on their own. Make sure that your puppy is on an excellent diet such as Hill's Science Diet, free of parasites, vaccinated and kept clean and dry since these will all help him have a strong immune system.

A simple skin test is needed to diagnose Demodex. If your pet is seriously infected, he can undergo treatment. We recommend having the Veterinary clinic dip your pet since the technique is critical for success. The pet must be bathed first, usually in an antiseptic shampoo, and rinsed thoroughly. The dip is then sponged all over the dog for 10 minutes. You must get the dip in contact with every inch of the pet's body including the ears, around the eyes, nose, tail and especially the feet. It is often beneficial to let the pet stand in the dip for at least 10 to 15 minutes. A few dogs will experience some side effects from the dip and we do have an antidote at the clinic. Your pet must be dipped every two weeks. The skin is checked for live mites once a month for as long as it takes to get two negative skin scrapings.

Some dogs will be negative for mites for months only to have the problem come back. These dogs never develop the ability to regulate the number of mites on their skin and need long term

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treatment. There are some experimental treatments being used that may eliminate or decrease the need for dipping.

It is very important to realize that Demodex is a **genetic disease**. That means that if your dog has even a mild case, he can pass it on to any offspring. That is why any dog that has ever had Demodex should never be bred. He, his parents and litter mates should be spayed or neutered. It would be irresponsible to not **spay or neuter** an affected animal even if treatment is successful.

Sarcoptic mange is a whole different story. Usually just two treatments with Revolution will cure your pet of this highly contagious, yet easy to kill mite. Antibiotics are often needed to treat the secondary skin infection.

If you have any questions, please give us a call at the Animal Hospital of Lanesville at 952-3643. 🐾