

# **DEMODECTIC MANGE**

**Demodectic Mange**, also called “Red Mange,” is a **noncontagious** skin disease that has been around as long as there have been dogs and veterinarians. It still is one of the most difficult medical conditions to manage successfully in some cases.

**It is caused by a tiny parasite which lives in the hair follicles and skin glands of the dog.**

Puppies are infected with mites from contact with the skin of their mother while nursing. The mites are present in the skin of many healthy dogs and do not cause disease. It is thought that pets diagnosed with demodectic mange are “immunodeficient”--unable to fight off the mites as a healthy dog would do. This allows large numbers of the mites to appear.

**Demodex occurs almost exclusively in young dogs (3 months to 1 year of age). When the disease is seen in older animals, they usually have been afflicted since their youth.**

*Demodectic mange is seen in two forms:*

**Localized** mange is confined to a few small areas usually involving the face or front feet, and is relatively easy to treat.

**Generalized** mange is one of the most severe canine skin diseases, and treatment is **NOT** always successful!

**The skin may become infected with bacteria--eventually allowing the hair follicles to rupture expelling pus. The skin may become dry, crusty, brittle, and ooze serum, blood, or pus. A strong, offensive skin odor may be present due to the secondary bacterial infection.**

A hereditary predisposition is suggested. Affected dogs should be spayed/neutered to prevent passing the disease on to their offspring. Even though all pups in the litter may not show signs of demodex, they still may be a carrier capable of passing on the disease to any offspring they produce.

**Dogs should also be spayed to reduce the stress of the estrus (heat) cycle, which may cause acute flare-ups of this disease.**

Animals with small, local lesions of demodex usually recover well without recurrence. Diligent, time-consuming therapy is required for full recovery in the severe, generalized cases. Because a defect in the immune system plays a part in this disease, some dogs **DO NOT** recover! If the skin infection spreads to other parts of the body, the dog may become systemically sick and even die. Severely affected animals that do recover seldom show signs of the disease again. However there are some dogs that require a periodic treatment for the rest of their life to keep the disease under control.

**\* Your dog usually will look WORSE for 2-4 weeks after treatment is begun because of the hairs that are already affected when treatment is begun. Recovery takes a minimum of 6-12 weeks in most cases. Many cases fail to respond due to a lack of proper treatment by YOU--the owner!**

## TREATMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

**Medication must be individualized to your particular pet's stage of disease and clinical signs present. Please follow the treatment procedures checked below:**

- Feed a high-quality, well-balanced diet.**
- Be sure the dog's immunizations are up-to-date and that the dog is free of internal parasites.**  
This is especially important since the dog's immune system is not working as it should be.
- Thyroid Hormone Supplement. Give \_\_\_\_\_ tablets once/twice daily.**
- Fatty Acid/Zinc Supplements. Give \_\_\_\_\_ teaspoon(s) once daily.**
- Vitamin E Supplementation. Give \_\_\_\_\_ (units/tablets) \_\_\_\_\_ times daily.**
- Systemic Antibiotics. Give as directed.**
- Apply ointment to affected skin areas once/twice each day.**
- Clip hair as short as possible for more effective skin treatment.**
- Bring Pet To Clinic Every 7 - 14 Days For Amitraz Dipping.**  
Amitraz is the only currently approved treatment for demodectic mange. It must be diluted properly and applied in a specific way. This treatment cannot be dispensed. **It must be applied in the clinic by trained personnel.** A minimum of 6-8 treatments is required. Some require much longer treatment. In mild cases, the solution is applied every 2 weeks. In more severe cases, current research recommends weekly application. The most common side-effect of the medication is drowsiness, which may last 24-48 hours. Please notify the clinic if severe depression exists for more than 2 days after treatment or other abnormalities are noticed.

**DO NOT ALLOW THE PET TO GET WET BETWEEN TREATMENTS. DO NOT APPLY ANYTHING ELSE TO THE SKIN WITHOUT OUR APPROVAL.** Successful treatment depends on the medication staying on the skin for the period of time between treatments.

**Recheck in \_\_\_\_\_ weeks.**

**Other:**

Recovery rate is approximately 85% with a 6 - 8 treatment procedure in less severe cases. An additional 6 treatments will increase the recovery rate to about 95%. 5% of affected dogs do **NOT** respond to treatment and will **NOT** recover. In more severe cases, there are other new suggested treatments which have not been officially approved by FDA for use. We will discuss these additional medications with you if we feel they should be considered in the treatment of your pet.

**Be prepared to diligently treat your dog for 6-12 weeks minimum. A common cause of relapses is a failure to treat the pet long enough before medication is discontinued.**

**Demodectic mange has been around about as long as dogs--and is still very difficult to treat in some cases because of the suppressed immune system present in some of these pets. We are successful, however in most cases.**